

**EXAMINING THE PERCEPTIONS OF URBAN AFRICAN AMERICAN
ELEMENTARY TEACHERS: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE MATERIALS
INTO THE CLASSROOM**

A Dissertation

by

JOHNETTA HICKS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2010

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACT

Examining the Perceptions of Urban African American Elementary Teachers:

The Implementation of Culturally Responsive Materials

Into the Classroom. (December 2010)

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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between urban teachers' perceptions and their implementation of culturally responsive materials into the classroom. Specifically, this study examined the influences of age, years of teaching experience, level of education, professional development, and prior knowledge with culturally diverse populations on perceptions of implementing culturally responsive materials into urban elementary classrooms.

Based on the results of this research, the variables of age, teaching experience, and professional development were found to affect how teachers value culturally responsive materials. This suggests that variables can have important ramifications for educators and administrators in urban and culturally diverse schools.

DEDICATION

For several years, my husband Marcus has provided endearing support, encouragement, and advice that helped me in my quest in completing this dream. Thank you for providing me with comfort when things went wrong, with cheer when things went well, and love throughout it all, which gave me the strength to complete my dreams.

To my children, Alexis and Ashley, who so lovingly encouraged me to continue this journey. Thank you for helping make this dream possible.

I genuine and sincerely thank my parents, Mr. John A. and Mrs. Annetta James Brazile, whose legacy was a constant source of motivation. Thanks for all your spiritual presence that has allowed me to reach for excellence. To my brother and sister, thank you for all the advice.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The United States is a nation of many cultures and nowhere is this conglomeration better represented than in our education system. Yet, the demographic compositions of our schools have changed significantly over the last century. Student demographics in U.S. schools have shifted throughout most of the twentieth century, undergoing a vast racial and ethnic transformation (Orfield & Lee, 2007). Hispanic students now outnumber African American students, Asian enrollment is steadily increasing, and the percentage of White students attending the country's public schools continues to shrink (Orfield & Lee, 2007). While student diversity grows, the majority of teachers remain overwhelmingly White.

Banks (1997) conceptualized multicultural education as an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process. As an idea, multicultural education initiatives seek to create equal educational opportunities for all students, including those from different racial, ethnic, and social-class groups. Additionally, using this definition, educators try to create those opportunities by changing the total school environment so that it will reflect the diverse cultures and groups within the nation's classrooms.

Compared to White students, culturally diverse students do not often exceed minimal standards when teachers measure achievement with traditional indicators such as grades, graduation rates, success on standardized tests, and dropout rates (Alexander, 2002; Allen, 1988; Entwisle & Alexander, 1988). Gay (2000) states that:

This dissertation follows the style of *The Journal of Educational Research*.

“Much intellectual ability and many other kinds of intelligences are lying untapped in ethnically diverse students. If these are recognized and used in the instructional progress, student achievement will improve radically” (p. 103).

Consequently, incorporating the student’s culture in the context of teaching and learning is an essential ingredient in improving student academic success. Successful students bring to school those values the school regards as appropriate while those students who fail to traverse the cultural climate of the school and fail to code switch, assimilate, or culture switch to the dominant school culture (Irvine, 1990, 2003) are at a greater risk for failing.

At its core, this theoretical framework has cultural responsive teaching and pedagogy that integrate the students’ culture by developing planned instructions and teaching styles that are supportive of multiple learning styles. The teacher is expected to have a broad knowledge base of the subject content and adopt an attitude that is reflective and supportive of the expertise required to achieve this pedagogy (Irvine & Armento, 2001).

Multicultural Responsive Materials

Banks (1999) supports the social cultural perspective offered by the Symbolic Interaction and Social Vygotskian theories. Banks argues that knowledge is positional and it relates to individuals such that a teacher’s perceptions, values, and experiences become the dominant cognitive standard by which culture is transmitted from student to teacher. White, middle-class female teachers bring to the classroom values and experiences that create perceptions and beliefs different from the diverse students they

teach, which can cause ideological conflicts (Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006).

According to Banks (2009), introducing a transformative, culturally action-oriented curriculum, teachers can modify their attitudes and beliefs about culturally responsive materials. This will enable them to view diverse education from a standard of high expectations for students encompassing the inclusion of culturally responsive instruction, knowledgeable teachers, and appropriate instructional resources. These elements contribute to the implementation of culturally responsive teaching that closes the achievement gap of culturally diverse students (Banks, 2009).

A teacher's perceptions of diverse cultures representative of their student population influence curriculum and teaching material selections. Culturally responsive curricula and materials alone fail to provide positive role models for diverse learners as well as address their unique cultural learning styles (Au, 1993; Banks, 1997; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Delpit, 1992, 2006; D. Garcia, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 2005; Nieto, 1999). Culturally responsive teaching explores the diverse perspectives of students reaching across boundaries of nationality, race, religion, and other social and cultural identities. Differences are valued rather than compared. Culturally responsive teaching is education for life rather than being tied to just one or a few transitory outcomes (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

Culturally Responsive Curriculum

It is essential that teachers who teach multicultural education be aware of the effects their own perceptions have on the perceptions of culture formed within the minds

of students. As Baker (1972) suggests, if teachers perceived ethnic groups favorably, they are more likely to develop skills for teaching a multicultural curriculum. The multicultural curriculum is a dynamic process; it is not possible to create a multicultural curriculum, hand it to teachers, and claim that a multicultural curriculum exists. The teacher's role in the implementation of a culturally responsive curriculum is an integral part of a multicultural curriculum because the teachers mediate the curriculum with their own values, perspectives, and teaching styles (Banks, 1991). When used by a teacher who lacks a knowledge base in multicultural education or who does not have positive and clarified perceptions of a range of racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups, multicultural instructional materials prove ineffective (Banks, 1994). A well-designed, continuing professional development program is essential for the development and implementation of an effective multicultural curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

The focus of creating and implementing a multicultural curriculum is the development of teaching strategies that are engaging, interactive, personalized, and cooperative. The implementation of a multicultural curriculum would legitimize the voices of students from different racial, cultural, and gender groups. Multicultural content is inherently emotive, personal, conflicting, and interactive with peers and classmates (Valdez, 1999). In order for teachers to implement effective curriculum practices, two approaches are common in extant literature. Banks' (1999, 2001) typology consists of four approaches: (a) the contribution approach, which focuses on holidays, heroes, and discrete events; (b) the additive approach in which concepts, themes, and perspectives are simply added to the curriculum; (c) the transformative approach in

which the curriculum is structurally changed to include relevant events from a diverse ethnic perspective; and (d) the social-action approach in which students are encouraged to make decisions on important social issues and to help solve them.

The second common typology consists of five approaches (Grant & Sleeter, 1994). These approaches are: (a) teaching cultural differences in which students are equipped with cognitive skills, concepts, information, and values that are necessary to function effectively in American society; (b) teaching with a human relations approach in which the goal is to promote tolerance and unity; (c) single group studies that seek to reveal how various cultural groups have been treated historically; (d) multicultural education that attempts to reduce prejudice and discrimination against oppressed groups; and (e) education that is multicultural and socially reconstructive extending the previous method to include analytical and critical thinking (Grant & Sleeter, 1994). Culturally responsive teachers know well the strengths and weaknesses of the multicultural education curriculum, are more than just familiar with relevant instructional materials, and revise these materials as necessary to improve the existing curriculum (Gay, 2002).

Teacher Demographics

Teachers serving the diverse population of U.S. elementary students represent approximately 88% White, monolingual females who were reared in lower or middle-class families, and now reside in rural or suburban settings (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). These teachers are invariably confronted with students who are culturally, linguistically, ethnically, and economically diverse from their own cultural background (Banks, 2009). Very few of these teachers have had cross-cultural

experiences, and only a minority of them attended schools or socialized with people of color (Gay & Howard, 2000). As in the past, these White teachers continue to be the transmitters of the dominant White-perspective culture (Valentiin, 2006).

Extant research suggests that when teachers and students differ in their cognitive structures, both teachers and students apply their own cultural standards (Nieto, 2005). Children raised within White cultural, ethnic, racial, and class groups develop different procedures and expectations for communicating with others. Both teachers and students communicate in ways their cultures view as normal, which eventually results in conflicting communication between students and teachers. (Delpit, 1992; McDermott, 1997).

The literature shows that many factors affect the abilities of educators to address students' individual learning needs including the teachers' own understanding of personal culture, perceptions of the students' home cultures, and differences in learning styles. Research suggests that the rapidly growing diverse student population presents schools in the United States with increasingly challenging issues in the areas of teaching and learning not familiar to contemporary teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1994b, 2006). This awareness has motivated many educators to examine different instructional solutions with the goal of overcoming the cultural discontinuity that "centers on a possible mismatch between the culture of the school and the culture of the home" (Au, 1993, p. 8). Culturally responsive educators will therefore seek solutions that will provide better academic outcomes and opportunities for their students.

Statement of the Problem

Bennett (2007) advocates there is an overall need for teachers to be culturally responsive to a culturally diverse student population in order to raise the achievement of students of color. Teacher knowledge includes understanding the cultural characteristics and contributions of different ethnic groups to successfully incorporate this knowledge within the curriculum (Tiedt & Tiedt, 2005). Fang, Fu, and Lamme (1999) suggests that teachers' perceptions were related to their classroom practice. Ladson-Billings (1994b) indicates that a better understanding of teachers' perceptions and the implementation of culturally pedagogy appear to enhance academic achievement of students of color

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between urban teachers' perceptions and their implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom. Specifically, this study examines the influences of age, years of teaching experience, education level, professional development, and prior experiences with culturally diverse populations on perceptions of implementing culturally responsive materials in urban elementary classrooms.

Significance of the Study

With a growing diverse student population being educated by predominately White teachers, representing the dominant society, it becomes increasingly important to determine whether these teachers are adequately prepared for their perceptions of working with racially diverse groups of students in implementing culturally responsive materials within the classroom. In the field of culturally responsive teaching,

instructional strategies and the use of multicultural materials that address the students' learning styles, students' strengths and prior knowledge, and the implementation have the potential to enhance academic performance of students of diverse cultures (Gay 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Further, the results of this study will assist educators in designing and implementing professional development programs, structured around multicultural education tenets. This information accentuates the importance of including culturally responsive materials within the classroom in a bid to improve overall student achievement. By understanding teachers' perceptions and implementations of culturally responsive materials, teachers and administrators can develop culturally relevant curricula. This research can further assist professional development coordinators plan effective professional development training to include the implementation of culturally responsive materials to improve student achievement.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their age group?
2. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their ethnic group?

3. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their years of teaching experience?
4. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of education?
5. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of professional development in multicultural education?
6. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of prior experience with culturally diverse populations?

Definition of Terms

The following terms were operationally defined for the purpose of providing clarity and understanding relative to the focus of this study:

Age – the chronological age of the urban elementary teachers responding to the survey at the time of the study using the following scale: “25 Years or less,” “26-30 Years,” “31-35 Years,” “36-40 Years,” and “41 Years or more.”

Ethnicity – the race of an urban elementary teacher. In this study, teachers indicated being a member of one of the following ethnic groups: African American, White, Hispanic American, Asian American, or other ethnic group.

Experienced Teacher – 11 to 15 years of teaching experience.

Culturally Responsive Materials – teaching learning and research resources that include course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, test software, and other tools, resources, or techniques used to support access to cultural knowledge.

Level of Prior Knowledge – knowledge as measured by Culturally Responsive Materials Survey (CRMS) participating in previous cross cultural experiences.

Moderately Experienced Teacher – 6 to 10 years of teaching experience.

Multicultural Courses – refers to the field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporate content, concept, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral science, and particularly from ethnic and women studies (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Novice Teacher – 5 years or less years of teaching experience.

Perceptions – the belief or attitude about learners, an awareness of our individual interests and strengths.

Prior Knowledge – is a combination of the learner’s preexisting perceptions, experiences and knowledge.

Professional Development Multicultural Education – taking courses in multicultural education or teaching experience in culturally diverse school.

Professional Experiences – refers to everyday activities, events in our lives that provide background understanding about us.

Urban Elementary Teacher – a certified teacher who provides academic instruction in an urban school setting to first through sixth grade students.

Veteran Teacher – 16 years or more of teaching experience.

Years of Teaching Experience – refers to number of years an urban elementary school teacher has been teaching using the following scale: novice teacher (5 years or less), moderately experienced (6 to 10 years), experienced teacher (11 to 15 years), and veteran teacher (16 years or more).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made:

1. The yielded survey responses represented honest and unbiased opinions and perceptions.
2. Participants were representative of urban elementary teachers.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was undertaken with the following limitations identified and considered:

1. Surveys of participants were collected from one school district located in the southern region of the United States.
2. The results of the study were time-bound; the participants' responses were reflective of a given point in time.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Multiculturalism is a social and political movement in the United States that values the diverse perspectives people develop and maintain through their experiences and backgrounds derived from racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, or class differences. It strives to uphold the ideals of equality, equity, and freedom upon which the United States is based and includes respect for individuals and groups as a principle fundamental to the success and growth of our country (Boykin, 1994). As a movement to promote cultural awareness and respect for ethnicity, multicultural education helps determine the degree of intellectual interest of people of color students (Valdez, 1999). Part of the multicultural movement is recognition of the benefits to students that implementing culturally responsive curricula, pedagogies, and materials in diverse classrooms offers.

Ladson-Billings (1994a) proposes the use of culturally relevant instructions as a method of teaching and defines this type of instruction as a pedagogy that empowers students in other ways to ensure scholastic achievement. Banks (2009) argues that when teachers properly implement multiethnic education in the classroom, all components of the school structure are reformed including the curriculum, teaching methods, materials, school policy, counseling, and teacher perceptions and expectations. In addition, various learning styles, languages, and individual expressions are accepted in the school. Strategies such as these that convey respect for students and affirm their differences

become the basis for meaningful relationships between teachers and students and produce favorable academic results (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 1990).

The interrelationship of the urban teachers, culturally responsive materials, teachers' culture and background, which consist of perceptions, values, and beliefs, the teachers' prior knowledge, and professional developments are integrated into the curriculum to result in student achievement. The relationships between multicultural education informs the teachers of his/her responsibility of the implementation of culturally responsive materials to meet student achievement.

Culturally responsive teaching integrates the students' culture by developing lessons using resources from the child's culture. Urban teachers, who are aware of culturally responsive teaching (Figure 1), demonstrate a willingness to include students' diverse backgrounds. Research suggests that these variables individually or collectively might affect the achievement. Research also suggests that there is a close relationship between each of these variables and the academic achievement of students.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy is one approach to multiculturalism that offers all students equal access to knowledge about different cultures with the intent of producing better cultural awareness and relations for all stakeholders. According to Ladson-Billings (1994b), culturally responsive pedagogy is defined as "an approach to teaching and learning that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 18).

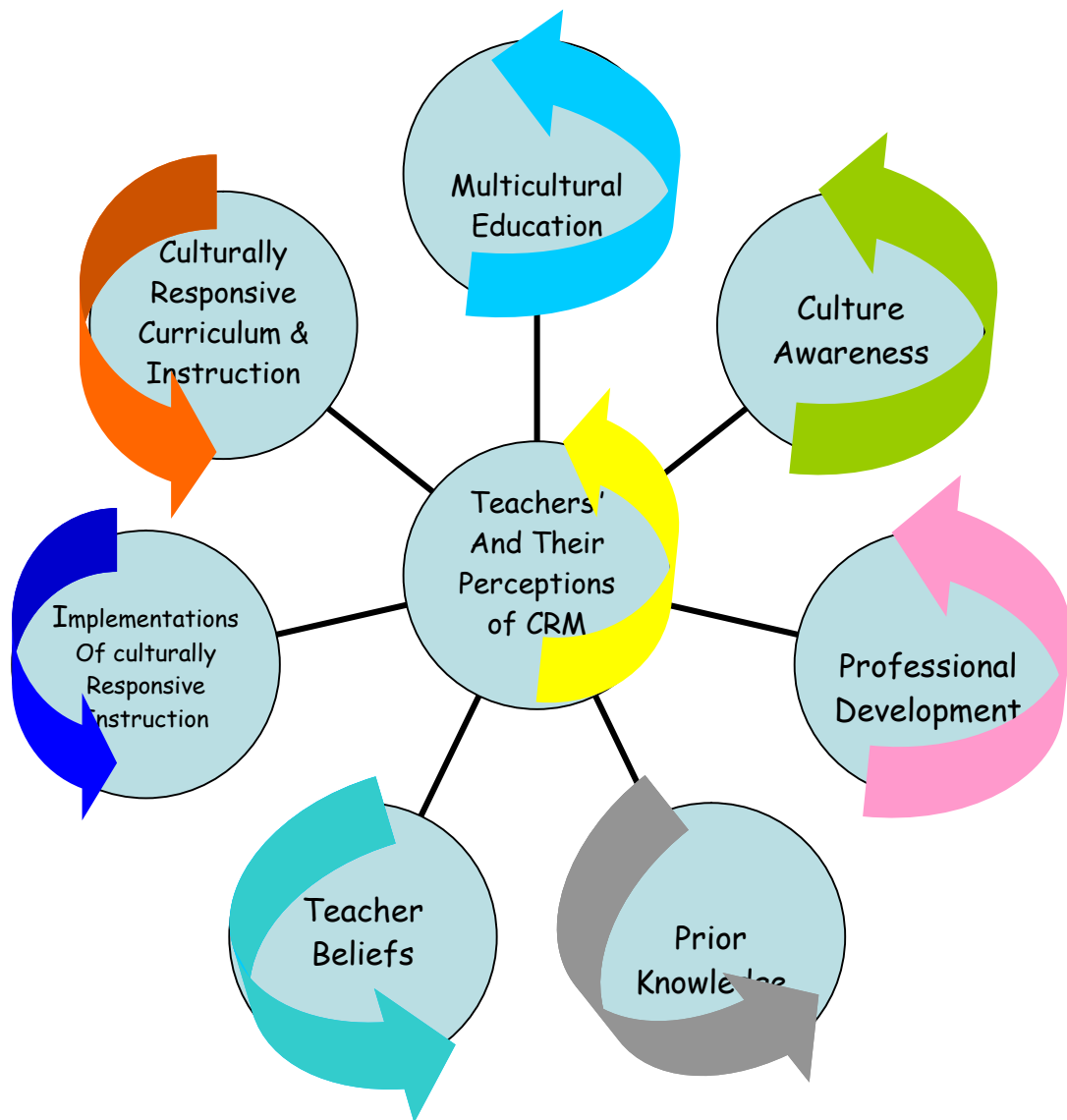


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of variables in the implementation of culturally responsive materials.

Multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy require reformed curricula and strategies to empower students representing cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and economically diverse groups (Banks, 2009; Gay, 2000). By routinely incorporating “examples, data, and information from various cultures to illustrate key concepts,

principles, generalizations, and theories” (Banks, 2009, p. 12) within the curricula of the different subject areas, students better understand “how knowledge was created and influenced by racial, ethnic, and social classes that reflect the social content of the times” (Banks, 2009, p. 21).

The Multicultural Education Theory was developed in the 1970s and has since gained favor among researchers and educators as a means of raising the academic achievement of culturally diverse students. The educational achievement gap between mainstream and diverse students continues to stimulate research in the area of multicultural education (Banks, 2009; Gay, 2000). Multicultural education increases equality in education for all students by incorporating concepts, content, theories, principles, and paradigms from history, the behavioral and social sciences, and women and ethnic studies (Banks & Banks, 2004).

The major principle of multicultural education is that theory must address instruction and instruction, in turn, must be based on the philosophy that ethnicity, race, culture, gender, social class, language, religious affiliation, and abilities influence the unique learning needs of students (Banks, 2009). Multicultural education is implemented through equity pedagogy, a theoretical and research-based approach to addressing the educational needs of a diverse student population. Through this approach, educators consider a student’s ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds when making culturally responsive pedagogy selections in a bid to provide new learning experiences to diverse students within a mainstream learning environment (Au, 1993; Banks & Banks, 2004; D. Garcia, 2004; Nieto, 2005). Diverse students have difficulty adjusting both behaviorally

and academically to the American process; teachers lack the knowledge and skills specific to the needs of diverse students. Educators hold negative perceptions regarding races, cultures, or languages different from their own (E. E. Garcia, 2004).

According to multicultural educators, these reasons for placing students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds into special education programs perpetuate power issues that social and political arenas in the United States reflect (Au, 1993). These educators believe that multicultural education provides equal educational opportunities for all students and reduces power issues in classrooms (Banks, 2009).

Cultural Awareness

A key goal of multicultural education is to help individuals gain greater self-understanding by viewing themselves from the perspectives of other cultural awareness. Other cultural awareness definitions include Graff (1992) and Lee (1993): (a) providing students with cultural and ethnic alternatives; (b) providing all students with the skills, perceptions, and knowledge needed to function within their ethnic culture, within the mainstream culture, and within and across other ethnic cultures; (c) reducing the pain and discrimination that members of some ethnic and racial groups experience because of their unique racial, physical, and cultural characteristics; and (d) helping students master essential reading, writing, and math skills. Multicultural education initiatives are built on the assumption that multicultural content helps students master these important skills.

Education affirms and helps students understand their home and community cultures. However, it also helps to free them from cultural boundaries. To create and maintain a civic community that works for the common good, education in a democratic

society should help students acquire the knowledge, perceptions, and skills needed to participate in civic action to make society more equitable and just (Valdez, 1999).

Goodwin (1994) articulates that meaningful multicultural education starts with self-awareness of one's own perceptions, beliefs, and values. Thus, if teachers are to understand and appreciate multiculturalism, they must obtain more than just tangential knowledge of it. They must have a conscious awareness of, be comfortable with, and exhibit sensitivity to culturally responsive material in order to accurately portray multiculturalism in the classroom.

Multicultural Education

In a succinct treatment of the subject, Banks and Banks (2004) state that

Multicultural education is a field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups. One of its important goals is to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with peoples from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good. (p. xi)

The ever-changing trend of multicultural education is becoming a salient part of America's school curriculum. Scholars of color have played a major role in formulating theory, research, and practice of the current multicultural education movement. For example, much of the early work of African American architects of the multicultural education movement focused on teaching African American studies in the schools (Banks, 2009). Researchers interested in ethnic studies heralded the early stages of multicultural education interest. Multiethnic education was viewed as incorporating structural changes across the system (Banks & Banks, 2004; Grant & Sleeter, 2006). In

the last three decades, the demographics of the United States and the nation's classrooms have changed dramatically. As Atwater (1994) indicates, a society that fails to educate its future generation will "lack scientific literacy, and our entire community will lose the contributions of these students in the fields of engineering, science and mathematics" (p. 172).

As the multiethnic movement gained momentum and schools began to respond to some of the educational needs of African American students and other students of color, other groups who consider themselves marginalized by society began to demand that school curricula change to reflect the perspectives, struggles, dreams, and realities of a diverse population (Banks, 2009). Multicultural education evolved as the vehicle for school districts, colleges, and universities to respond collectively to the diverse and often conflicting demands of these various groups (Banks, 2006). It is from this historical context that teacher education programs shape and continue to shape their curriculum practices to prepare teachers to instruct diverse student populations. For example, African American college students felt that higher education needed to address the diversity that existed on their campuses. As a result, these students facilitated the process that colleges and universities instituted to restructure curriculum practices and racial policies (Bassey, 1997). By incorporating teaching about diverse people within the schools' curricula, diverse groups could more easily see that their histories and identities were of importance not only to themselves but to other diverse groups as well (Sleeter, 2007).

The political and social turmoil of the student and civil rights movements placed schools and colleges in a position to answer the demands of groups of people who no longer wanted to remain on the margins of society (Ladson-Billings, 1999). As a result, multicultural education initiatives examined ethnic studies focusing on the historical and cultural context. According to Banks and Banks (2004), multicultural education consists of “theory, research, and practice that interrelate variables connected to race, class, and gender” (p. 13). Many researchers have formulated different approaches to multicultural education. According to Sleeter and Grant (2006), one approach suggests that focusing on the education of people of color is the only common element among the many varied approaches to multicultural education. Banks (2009) articulates five dimensions of multicultural education including: (a) content integration, (b) knowledge construction process, (c) prejudice reduction, (d) equity pedagogy, and (e) empowering school culture and social structure.

Content Integration

Content integration, according to Banks (2009), deals with the degree to which teachers use examples, data, and information from different cultures and groups to demonstrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in different subject areas or disciplines.

Knowledge Construction

Knowledge construction describes the process by which social, behavioral, and natural scientists create knowledge and the manner in which the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence

the ways in which knowledge is constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gould, 1981). When teachers implement the knowledge construction process in the classroom, they help students understand how knowledge is created and influenced by not only the social class positions of individuals and groups, but also by their racial, ethnic, and gender composition.

Prejudice Reduction

The prejudice reduction dimension of multicultural education draws attention to the characteristics of children's racial attitudes and to the strategies that can be used to help students in the development of more positive racial and ethnic perceptions. Social scientists from as early as the 1960s discovered a great deal about the development of racial attitudes in children and about ways in which educators can design interventions to help children acquire more positive feelings toward other racial groups.

Equity Pedagogy

Equity pedagogy exists when teachers utilize techniques and teaching methods that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups. Using cooperative learning techniques that accommodate the learning and cultural styles of diverse groups is a successful teaching technique when used with students from diverse racial, ethnic, and language groups.

Empowering School Culture and Social Structure

An empowering school culture and social structure describes the process of restructuring the culture and organization of the school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social groups experience educational equality and cultural

empowerment. Empowering the school culture involves focusing on the school as the unit rather than as a collection of smaller classroom units to increase the academic achievement and emotional growth of diverse students (Banks, 2006).

Banks (2009) identifies five types of knowledge and describes their implications from a multicultural perspective. He suggests that teachers need to be aware of these types of knowledge so they can structure a curriculum that helps students understand each type. He also believes that teachers should use their own cultural knowledge combined with that of their students to enrich teaching and learning. These types of knowledge include: (a) personal/cultural including the concepts, explanations, and interpretations that students derive from personal experiences in their homes, families, and community cultures; (b) popular knowledge that is institutionalized by the mass media and other forces that shape the popular culture and has a strong influence on the values, perceptions, and behavior of children and young people; (c) mainstream academics including concepts, theories, and explanations that constitute traditional Western-centric knowledge in history and in the social and behavioral sciences; (d) transformative knowledge that challenges the facts, concepts, paradigms, themes, and explanations routinely accepted in mainstream academic knowledge; and (e) school culture that is highly competitive in which children of color often experience failure if they do not decode the implicit rules and tacit knowledge necessary for success.

These five dimensions promote the total infusion of multicultural education thus providing opportunities for social activism and transformation of both educators and students throughout all subject areas (Banks, 2005, 2009; Banks & Banks, 2004). These

dimensions present educators with the tools for providing equitable pedagogy for all students.

Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Instruction

In a culturally responsive classroom, the curriculum forms the basis for the implementation of effective teaching and learning (Koppelman & Goodhart, 2005, 2008; Pang, 2005). Gay (2000) identified curriculum content as paramount to the empowerment of diverse students by advocating that knowledge be transmitted through the curriculum in such a way that students can connect their lives and experiences outside of school with what is taught thus allowing for “academic success, cultural affiliation, and personal efficacy” (p. 111).

Several researchers identify textbooks as an impediment to culturally responsive pedagogy since many teachers consider them the curriculum itself (Gay, 2000; Sleeter & Grant, 2006). Brown and Kysilka (2002) argue that using textbooks as a substitute for a curriculum in diverse student populations is a barrier to the culturally responsive classroom because textbooks often reflect the perspectives of the majority class. They emphasize that “in order for multicultural curriculum development to occur, teachers must grasp the essential concepts of a text not being the curriculum itself” (p. 122). After a review of over 45 elementary and middle-level textbooks published in the United States, Sleeter and Grant (2006) agreed. Their results suggest that these textbooks predominantly feature the European-American culture and provide an insignificant coverage of other cultures.

To overcome this inadequacy in current textbooks, Miller, Miller, and Schroth (1997) suggests that teachers develop curricula that reflect diversity from the perspectives of other cultures. Brown and Kysilka (2002) identify the following ten points as crucial for the evaluation of children's textbooks and literature for multicultural concepts: (a) checking illustrations, (b) paying attention to the story lines, (c) analyzing lifestyle, (d) evaluating the relationships between people, (e) noting the heroes in the textbooks and literature, (f) examining the content that shapes a child's self-image, (g) reviewing the author's or illustrator's background, (h) being aware of their perspectives, (i) recognizing the author's choice of words in reference to specific cultural groups or gender, and (j) noting the copyright date of the book because later publications often indicate material more sensitive to diverse cultures.

In discussing curriculum reform to accommodate multicultural classrooms, Banks (2009) proposes a four-level framework that infuses and transforms the curriculum. These levels include:

Level 1 – The Contributions approach focusing on heroes, heroines, holidays, foods, and discreet cultural elements that are celebrated occasionally.

Level 2 – The Additive approach consisting of content, concepts, lessons, and units added to the curriculum without changing its structure.

Level 3 – The Transformation approach in which the structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups.

Level 4 – The Action approach where students make decisions on important personal, social, and civic problems and take actions to help solve them.

Banks (2009) considers the first two levels as reflecting an ethnocentric point of view that progress from the superficial addition of pieces of different cultures to a level where students recognize ethnicity and racial events. In the next two levels, students begin to see the curriculum from multiple cultural points of view. Particularly in the Transformation approach, the curriculum offers students the opportunity to experience the voices of the victors and the vanquished and to analyze and critically evaluate the topic. In the Social action approach, teachers help students become informed members of society. In this approach, the curriculum becomes “the process, progress, and product of making a better world for all” (p. 117).

Several authors noted the classroom-hidden curriculum they believe is seldom recognized and almost never assessed (Brown & Kysilka, 2002; Pai & Adler, 1997; Tiedt & Tiedt, 2002). These authors define the hidden curriculum as the indirect way the school environment and teachers portray the values and ideals of their society; the teacher and students bring their individual values and norms from their own cultures into the classroom (Delpit, 2006; Pai & Adler, 1997). Tiedt and Tiedt (2002) urge educators to be aware of the hidden curriculum that causes reliance on stereotypes; they believe this is often the cause of teachers assuming all students have access to the same resources and operate with similar values.

To overcome this problem, Tiedt and Tiedt (2002) propose three goals to consider when developing the curriculum for a culturally responsive classroom. The first

goal prompts educators to recognize the importance of student self-esteem. In the second goal, educators guide students toward empathy for others. Goal number three requires the provision of equal opportunities for all students within the classroom. These authors note that “in the classroom, the curriculum and the teaching are indivisible...it is not possible to have teaching without a curriculum behind it, or a curriculum without knowing how it is going to be implemented through teaching” (Tiedt & Tiedt, 2002, p. 31).

Power issues that exist in the classroom reflect the power issues that exist in the social and political spheres of the United States. Mainstream society traditionally defines the standards by which all others are judged. Those who speak a different language, behave differently due to their custom or a physical handicap, or have a different look from the mainstream population are often regarded as substandard. Negative perceptions that exist in the classrooms, often held by educators regarding their students’ economic status, cultural background, ethnicities, languages, appearances, and abilities, perpetuate the incorrect belief that students from diverse backgrounds are unable to and/or struggle to grasp learning new material. Inadvertently, some teachers in perpetuating the mainstream social hierarchal beliefs and circumstances limit the educational progress of diverse students (Au, 1993; Banks, 2009; Nieto, 2004).

The purpose of culturally responsive education is to teach all students about the contributions made by individuals from different cultural backgrounds thus facilitating the learning and building of cultural pride among the students. It is the administration’s and teacher’s role to give support to all students in the learning process as these learners

build upon their valuable home and community experiences. Culturally responsive education is transformative for both educators and students alike. It requires careful reflection as it concerns power issues of personal, social, and instructional decisions that affect future academic, occupational, and citizenship opportunities of students from mainstream and diverse cultural backgrounds (Au, 1993; Banks, 2005, 2009).

Extant literature identifies the following as ways in which power within schools or classrooms manifests. First is the unequal distribution or lack of funds for some schools. This translates into unequal distributions of resources (teachers, materials, and professional specialists) for selected schools. Second is the perpetuation of prejudiced perceptions based on race, ethnicity, culture, gender, or language. Third is the requirement that English is the only acceptable form of expression in the school and classroom. This requirement particularly limits or deprives many students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds the opportunity to participate or excel academically. English-biased assessments and curricula also hinder diverse students from acquiring or accurately demonstrating knowledge. Fourth is the grouping of students. Often based on gender, ethnicity, language, ability, or race, these groupings ultimately reinforce discriminatory attitudes (Nieto, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2004).

Nieto (2005) contends that student learning progressively improves on “societal, institutional, personal, and collective levels” (p. 175). Transforming the educational settings into a culturally responsive environment requires consideration of several key instructional components. Banks (1997) and Gay (2000) also address these components in their discussions of multicultural education. Culturally responsive teaching strategies

address the needs of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and economically diverse students (Gay, 2000). “Teach the whole child...by any means necessary” (G. Gay, personal communication, March 22, 2002). Thus, this approach to pedagogy utilizes prior knowledge including examples of the students’ lives, cultural experiences, and interests to present knowledge and skills in the context of real world application (Banks, 2009; Gay, 2002; Irvine, 2003; Pang, 2001). Using the literature and language of diverse students engages students in the learning process and assists in learning new skills (Gay, 2000; Webb-Johnson, 2002).

According to Banks (2009) and Pang (2001), including cooperative learning groups as a teaching technique enables group members to see themselves as equals and to learn to respect members of other cultural groups. Incorporating learner-centered or activity engagement strategies as those described in multiple intelligences (Armstrong, 1994; Gardner, 1993) rather than teacher-directed instruction address the individual student’s learning styles and provide support to assist the student in increasing learning and achievement (Banks, 2009; Gay, 2000; Pang, 2001; Webb-Johnson, 2002). This philosophy teaches students to accept and honor their own and others’ cultural heritages (Gay, 2000). Inclusion of multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy within the curriculum better prepares teachers to manage cultural issues in the classroom.

Ladson-Billings (1995) indicates that a key criterion for culturally relevant teaching is nurturing and supporting competence in both the home and school cultures. Teachers should use the students’ home cultural experiences as a foundation upon which to develop knowledge and skills. Content learned in this way is more significant to the

students and facilitates the transfer of what is learned in school to real-life situations (Padron, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002). Ladson-Billings (1992) explains that culturally responsive teachers develop intellectual, social, emotional, and political learning by “using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and perceptions” (p. 382). The culturally responsive teacher teaches the whole child (Gay, 2000). Hollins (1996) adds that education designed specifically for students of color incorporates “culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content” (p. 13). Culturally responsive teachers realize not only the importance of academic achievement but also the importance of maintaining cultural identity and heritage (Gay, 2000).

Ladson-Billings (1994a) studied actual instruction in elementary classrooms and observed these values. She saw that when students are part of a more collective effort designed to encourage academic and cultural excellence, expectations are clearly expressed, skills are learned, and interpersonal relations are established. In this pedagogy, students behave like members of an extended family, assisting, supporting, and encouraging each other. In addition, students are held accountable as part of a larger group, and it becomes everyone’s task to make certain that each individual member of the group successfully promotes the community of learners. Teachers respond to the students’ need for a sense of belonging, honor their human dignity, and promote their individual self-concepts (Gay, 2000).

In a culturally diverse classroom, students tend to understand that there is more than one way to interpret a statement. When teachers allow students to learn in this new

way or share viewpoints and perspectives in a given situation based on their own cultural and social experiences, students become active participants in their learning (Nieto, 2004). Hollins (1996) suggests that culturally mediated instruction provides the best learning conditions for all students and helps decrease the number of incidences of unacceptable behavior from students who are frustrated with an educational system that is not meeting their needs. Students from diverse cultural groups who experience academic success are less inclined to form stereotypes about students from other cultures.

Teachers

According to Banks and Banks (2004), while the nation's students are becoming increasingly more diverse, most of the nation's teachers are White, middle-class, monolingual females residing in rural or suburban settings. Few of these teachers have had cross-cultural experiences, attended schools, or socialized regularly with people of color (Gay & Howard, 2000). Traditionally, teachers are transmitters of the dominant culture. In the United States, that culture is the White perspective (Colangelo, Austin, & Foxley, 1985). Representing the dominant culture, teachers value and apply a cognitive process constructed by their own culture, while students of color construct different cognitive structures based on their own cultures (Cannella & Reiff, 1994). The result is a cultural and cognitive mismatch between teachers and students.

Urban Teacher Perceptions

Mittag and Agnello (1999) conducted a longitudinal, multiculturalism study of preparatory teachers and how these teachers view student teaching and the internship

experience. The study examined school demographics, classroom experiences, and perceptions of cultural harmony in the classroom with respect to race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Results suggest that teacher perceptions of multiculturalism significantly predict variables related to classroom settings, pedagogy, and the school at which the internship took place. The study further revealed that teacher perceptions is a complex issue correlating with disparate teaching environments and student awareness of race, ethnicity, class, and gender issues.

Another study of prospective teachers suggests significant relationships between teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and teacher demographics (McElroy, 2005). The primary purpose of the study was to investigate how these student teachers perceive multicultural education, whether circumstances and experiences impact these perceptions, the ways in which student teachers implement pedagogy and beliefs about multicultural education, and any differences in the perceptions of prospective teachers based on age, gender, and years of experience. Results suggest no significant difference in prospective teachers' preferences for or perceptions of multicultural education based on these demographics.

Evidence of significant variability on the impact of teachers' perceptions of multicultural teaching remains inconclusive. Teachers who embrace multicultural education pedagogy must be aware of the effects their perceptions have on the student body. Landsman and Lewis (2006) suggest that if teachers perceive ethnic groups favorably, these teachers are more likely to develop competent skills for teaching a multicultural curriculum. Baker's research further suggests that strategies to include

multicultural education should be holistic, comprehensive in scope and sequence, and involve the total school environment. In addition, multicultural teaching strategies should include prejudice reduction by correcting misinformation in studies through a democratic classroom and school ethics, ethnic pluralism reflected in professional composition, positive multiethnic interactions with significant others, instruction that accounts for culturally different learning styles, and mutual and multiple of student teachers.

In a study to assess the perceptions of teachers toward multicultural curricula and cross-cultural experiences, Cooper (1990) found that while some teachers demonstrate multicultural competencies, others show less enthusiasm toward multicultural teaching. Teacher educators are often uncomfortable teaching students when a lesson requires discussion of race (Cross, 1993). In addition, this study found that teachers formulate and confirm initial prejudices and misunderstandings even in diverse settings. A similar study found that a single, multicultural, teacher education course had little impact on teachers' perceptions of the value of multicultural pedagogy. The research suggests that even if teacher educators explore prospective teachers' cultural backgrounds and allow them to explain their ideas and concerns about multicultural education, they still maintained a posture of resistance to change (McCall, 1995).

Titus (2002) attempted to determine what multicultural perceptions secondary school social studies teachers hold, what actions those teachers take as they implement multicultural education, and what barriers they face as they attempt to bring multicultural education to their students. A final question addressed the presence of

discernible patterns related to these matters that could be connected to differing levels of people of color enrollment. The results of the research suggest that all respondents infused multicultural education into their teaching. The study also revealed that the respondents' perspectives of multicultural education related primarily to increasing student awareness of other cultures, to deepening student understanding of those cultures, and improving human relations. The study further suggests that in some circumstances, multicultural education was present as the primary focus of a lesson while in other circumstances it was used to put the lesson's main point into context. This study also revealed that the respondents incorporated multicultural education primarily through three kinds of activity structures: (a) discussion, (b) instructional media, and (c) special projects and activities. Finally, the research indicates that teachers face barriers that hinder the inclusion of multicultural pedagogy. These barriers include lack of time, restrictions generated by curricular matters linked to goals and standards, student detachment and resistance, and the respondents' own personal perspectives (Titus, 2002).

Boyd (2002) examined elementary school teachers' perceptions of multicultural education. Results suggest that there are no significant relationships between teachers' perceptions of diversity in the classroom, their ages, years of teaching experience, gender, or ethnic backgrounds. In addition, there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of diversity and the level at which they implement multicultural education. Although no significant relationships were found, the scores on the teachers' perceptions survey indicate that they all had a positive perception of multicultural

education. The majority of teachers implement multicultural education at Banks' (2009) two lowest levels of integration of ethnic content. Those two levels are the Contributions approach, where the teacher focuses on heroes and holidays, and the Additive approach, where the teacher adds a book or unit to a lesson without changing the structure of the curriculum.

In a study to investigate which variables relate most significantly to in-service teachers' ethnic identifications and perceptions toward language diversity, Chang (1995) had four goals: (a) to examine the effects of exogenous variables (i.e., informed multicultural experiences and personal background) on formal multicultural experiences and personal background on teachers' ethnic identifications; (b) to probe the effects of formal and informal multicultural experiences and personal background on teachers' ethnic identifications; (c) to scrutinize the effects of ethnic identification, formal and informal multicultural experiences, and personal background on teachers' perceptions toward language diversity; and (d) to investigate more deeply the effects of informal multicultural experiences on teachers' ethnic identifications and perceptions toward language diversity. Results suggest that informal multicultural experience is an important variable in the formation and transformation of ethnic identification and attitude. In addition, pre-service multicultural education has a significant effect on language attitude. Teachers establish ethnic identifications and perceptions toward diversity based on informal multicultural experiences and personal background, but their perceptions could be changed through formal multicultural education. The study also

found that proficiency level in a foreign language was significant in predicting teachers' perceptions toward language diversity.

Scott (1998) investigated elementary teachers' multicultural perceptions in urban, suburban, and rural schools. Results suggest that urban, suburban, and rural elementary teachers are similar in their perceptions of implementing theoretical, negative, educational, and school climate values concerning multicultural education. Suburban teachers differ from the other three groups on the ranking of these four values. This research provides descriptive demographic data and results that could be used to develop further study in this area.

Professional Development

The content of any professional multicultural development program should address two specific areas: (a) cultural awareness and (b) cultural knowledge. To attain cultural awareness, teachers must first deconstruct and reconstruct their own worldview and question notions of class, race, and gender. Educators also need to learn about the cultures, languages, and learning experiences of their students. Multicultural development should include clear and specific examples infused with information about students' lives, experiences, and struggles as well as adoption of multiple strategies to try to reach students.

In a study that examined the perceptions and awareness of teachers concerning aspects of multicultural teaching and learning, Tatum (1998) found that teachers are aware of multicultural education and anticipate having to teach to diverse classrooms. Equally important, they are generally unaware about the benefits of teacher education

programs that prepare them with the skills needed to teach children from cultural backgrounds different from their own. Descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative analyses of data indicate that because of a diverse society, teachers need more multicultural professional development. Although this may be true, there are distinctions between the implications of teachers' current perceptions of multicultural education and awareness of that same multicultural education. A significant implication of these results is that teacher education programs are not responding to these differences. The investigation of this study clarifies the importance of this distinction.

Gallivan (1998) investigated the effects of a cross-cultural mentoring program in conjunction with diversity and communications on teachers' perceptions of racial diversity and multicultural education. Specifically, the study examines changes in teachers' cognitive and affective perceptions of racial diversity, people of color learners, multicultural education, and teaching as a career. Subjects received diversity/communications skills professional development in a required pre-professional course. Results suggest that the program significantly increased teachers' positive perceptions of racial diversity. This increase suggests that when teachers participate in multicultural education training, their awareness of, receptivity to, and sensitivity for racial diversity increases. One implication of this research is that training intervention has merit as a means to foster positive perceptions toward working with diverse students.

Brown (1992) studied the effectiveness of a multicultural professional development program for working teachers. His results suggest that a program designed to implement multicultural curriculum and integrate professionals is positive and

beneficial to teacher acceptance of racial diversity. Results also suggest that efforts to improve the professional development of teachers benefits students. This author further recommends that the educational system must be concerned with how students learn and how teachers teach in order to provide the best quality education to all of its students.

Lane (1998) investigated the perceptions of teachers to determine whether these perceptions pattern the multicultural education perceptions of other professionals. Variables in the study included the perceptions of teachers relative to personal/professional development, awareness and sensitivity, instructional paradigms, curriculum materials, and parent/community relations. Information regarding the total school environment was also gathered. Results of the study suggest that teachers have positive perceptions toward multicultural education as they relate to all of these variables. Administrators who perceive a school as supportive of multicultural education perceive their total school environment as one that promotes multicultural education. As years of administrative experience increases, a teacher's level of awareness and sensitivity to multicultural education increases. Interest in areas of instruction and parent/community relations increase as a teacher's positive perceptions about the school increases. Finally, a principal's personal schooling experiences had little or no effect on perceptions about multicultural education. However, teachers did feel that more courses and programs should be offered that address multicultural issues, and they would like to more frequently work with and be around diverse groups of people.

Prior Knowledge

Extant research suggests that teacher education programs are exploring how pre-service teachers and in-service teachers develop their perceptions (Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 1999; Gorman, 1998; Makkawi, 1999). It indicates how veteran teacher educators can intervene and facilitate a change in perceptions before pre-service teachers begin working with diverse student populations. One case study found that pre-service teachers who change their perceptions after multicultural training share these common characteristics: (a) openness to learning new ideas, (b) proactive behavior to learn about diversity, (c) high empathy for people of color students, and (d) significant caring about social justice (Winitzky & Barlow, 1998).

Similarly, in a study by Gunn (1994) that assessed teachers' perceptions of teaching from a multicultural perspective in an elementary setting, perceptions were measured to assess the amount of multicultural education preparation a teacher had previously experienced. Results suggest that teachers' perceptions about multicultural education varied across responses. Participants revealed that teachers are not as prepared to teach their stated ideals. Some responses indicate that teachers are fully aware of their lack of knowledge concerning this topic. Gunn (1994) recommends additional in-service professional development as needed for teachers to effectively teach from a multicultural perspective.

Individuals who know the world only from their own cultural and ethnic perspectives deny themselves important parts of the human experience because they are encapsulated both culturally and ethnically. These individuals are unable to know their

own culture fully because of their ethnic blinders. One can get a full view of our own backgrounds and behaviors only by viewing them from the perspectives of other racial and ethnic cultures (Gay, 2000).

According to Grant and Tate (2001), pre-service teaching experience that includes field experience and student teaching in urban high schools positively affects a teacher's ability to work with students from diverse populations. A study of pre-service teachers by Larke, Wiseman and Bradley (1990) supports this view. Their study suggests that after teachers interact with African American and Mexican American students, the perceptions of both groups change. When teachers are offered an opportunity to interact with people different from themselves, they also get an opportunity to use their instructional skills while at the same time learn more about the cultural background of the students they teach. As a result, both groups feel less threatened and more accepted as they became better acquainted with each other's cultures (Larke et al., 1990). In concurrence with these results, Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson (2004) emphasizes the importance of teachers being knowledgeable about student demographics and existing working conditions.

A case study by Mainhart (2002) explored the ways in which experienced teachers think about multicultural education and how they implement their beliefs in the classroom. Results suggest that teachers have different perceptions of the goals of multicultural education depending, mainly, on what they believe about diversity issues, who the students are, and at what kind of schools they work. This study concluded that professional development programs emphasizing understanding of personal experiences

with prejudice and discrimination would be the most effective way of providing experienced educators with the skills needed to implement multicultural education in the classroom.

The multicultural curriculum should be implemented with teaching strategies that are involving, interactive, personalized, and cooperative. The teacher should listen to and legitimize the voices of students from different racial, cultural, and gender groups. Multicultural content is inherently emotive, personal, conflict rich, and interactive with the peers and classmates (Valdez, 1999).

The multicultural curriculum is a dynamic process. Consequently, it is not possible to create a multicultural curriculum without the input of the teacher and claim that a multicultural curriculum has been instituted in a classroom, school, district, city, or entire educational system. The teacher's role in its implementation is an integral part of a multicultural curriculum. The teacher mediates the curriculum with her or his values, perspectives, and teaching styles (Haberman, 2005). Although multicultural materials are essential for implementing a multicultural curriculum, they are ineffective when used by a teacher who lacks a knowledge base in multicultural education or who does not have positive and clarified perceptions in a range of racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups (Haberman, 2005).

For teachers to implement culturally diverse materials, they must have knowledge and respect for the various cultural traditions and languages of students in their classroom. According to Williams (1992), anything less ensures that many ethnically and language diverse students will continue to fall short of meeting high

academic standards. According to Banks (2009) and Hollins (1990), teachers need a clear sense of their own ethnic and cultural identities so that they can understand and appreciate those of their students.

Teacher Beliefs

It is easier for students who are representative of the dominant culture to adjust to the school learning environment because their prior knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about their culture and that of other cultures are often identical to those maintained by their teachers and the schools. In addition, the teachers' discourse, actions, curriculum, and pedagogy selections can promote stereotypes and the false perception that diverse students are academically inferior. At the same time, diverse students learn to perceive the middle-class mainstream population as superior and dominant while internalizing feelings of inferiority and subordination about themselves and their cultures (Au, 1993; Banks, 1997; Nieto, 2004). Teachers sometimes do not recognize cultural or language differences that obstruct the progress of diverse students' scholastic achievement.

The requirement that students use only Standard English as the acceptable form of language expression in many classrooms leads students from diverse populations to struggle with speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, teachers and mainstream students often perceive these diverse students to be naturally inferior when it comes to academic achievement. As a result, some culturally diverse students who are struggling are labeled special needs' students and placed into special classes or pullout programs. This power imbalance creates obstacles for diverse students with only one way to succeed, the mainstream way (Au, 1993; Banks, 2009; Delpit, 2006; Nieto, 2004;

Tatum, 1997). These students continue to struggle unless equitable instructional practices are instituted. Teacher perceptions play a major role in this scenario; teacher perceptions concerning their students' cultural and ethnic backgrounds impact their awareness of the need to implement equitable pedagogy for the benefit of these students.

Robins and Terrell (2003) describe four guiding principles of cultural proficiency: (a) culture is a predominant force; you cannot NOT be influenced by culture; (b) people are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture; (c) it is important to acknowledge the group identity of individuals; and (d) respect the unique cultural needs that members of dominated groups may have (pp. 6-7). They further identify two barriers that prevent individuals from acquiring the principles of cultural proficiency: "the presumption of entitlement [and] unawareness of the need to adapt" (p. 7). There are six levels to the cultural proficiency continuum as defined by Robins and Terrell (2003): "cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-competence, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency" (pp. 86-87). Educators dedicated to providing successful learning experiences for their students continually seek to increase their self-awareness as it concerns issues of diversity and devise ways to manage the challenges faced by the diverse student population.

A teacher exhibiting cultural responsiveness demonstrates the following qualities: (a) exhibits a dedication to the provision of an equitable education for all students by employing culturally responsive instructional approaches including bonding with every student, learning about students' cultural backgrounds and neighborhoods, believing in each student's potential to succeed, developing trust and communication

with parents and family members, establishing a respectful classroom that is accepting of all cultures, ethnicities, and languages, and modeling culturally responsive behavior with students and colleagues; (b) is knowledgeable and comfortable with his or her personal background; (c) holds an understanding that diversity is personally transformative; (d) is a facilitator of social and curriculum reform; and (e) strongly believes in a student's ability to succeed, thus providing whatever strategies, modifications, scaffolding, or alternative methods for task completion or formulating other means of assessment necessary to give each student an equal opportunity to learn and demonstrate knowledge (Bustamante, 2006). The teacher's beliefs and attitudes strongly influence the instructional approach he/she selects.

Imbalance

Cannella and Reiff (1994) recommend that teachers reevaluate their cultural and social beliefs to determine how these beliefs and perceptions impact student learning. If teachers find that their perceptions impede their students' learning, they should alter them to provide equality in education and facilitate a democratic education process. As suggested by Nieto (2005), teachers interrupt the learning process when they fail to understand the diverse cultures of their students. Since teaching is interactive and context driven, teachers must consider the socio-cultural environment in which learning occurs (Phuntsog, 2001). In addition, developmental psychologists argue that cognitive and intellectual development should not be separated from the social context (Rogoff, 1990). If teachers fail to recognize multiple perspectives and the methods by which learners construct knowledge, these teachers experience cultural conflicts within the

classroom (Delpit, 2006). If teachers and students differ in their cognitive structures, the truth is difficult to determine since both teachers and students apply their own cultural standards. For culturally diverse students, school failure is best explained by the cultural mismatch of the classroom (York, 1997).

Teachers, who were reared and lived in a predominately White, middle-class culture, are generally underexposed to the presence and importance of multiculturalism and may be oblivious to the problems that confront students of underserved populations (Larke, 1990). Children who are taught with cultural approaches different from their own tend to be misguided as a result of miscommunication between the teachers and the students (McDermott, 1997). The result of this mismatch is further interrupted learning (Delpit, 2006; McDermott, 1997; Nieto, 2005). Issues of race and culture are critical in today's educational contexts at every level including pedagogy, curriculum development, and the teacher population. To address this mismatch, urban schools should address social and cultural beliefs through professional development to determine the ways in which their teachers' beliefs and perceptions impact students' learning (Cannella & Reiff, 1994).

Summary

The literature review examined a growing problem for diverse elementary school students in the United States. First, the literature clearly demonstrates that culturally responsive curricula, teaching, and materials are essential not only to ensure that diverse student populations can achieve their scholastic potential, but to ensure that students currently represented by the dominant culture do not grow up with the stereotype that the

underrepresented students are innately inferior when it comes to scholastic achievement. When the dominant culture views underrepresented cultures as inferior, they create a permanent underclass from which diverse populations cannot easily break free.

Second, the majority of elementary school teachers in the U.S. who are part of the dominant culture, were themselves educated with great emphasis on the dominant culture and have had little significant contact, interactions, and relationships with people who are part of the diverse population. The result is a cultural mismatch between teachers and students as the diverse population of students continues to diversify.

Third, there is a real danger that these teachers are undervaluing and failing to implement and recognize the necessary scholastic component of multiculturalism for the growing diverse student population. Given that the diverse population thrives scholastically under a multiculturalism curriculum paradigm and teachers who are mostly part of the dominant culture do not value or recognize the need for such as curriculum, it is unlikely that teachers will adopt culturally responsive curricula, teaching, and/or materials on their own.

Schools must take a serious look at their curriculum, pedagogy, retention and tracking policies, testing, hiring practices, and all the other practices that create a school climate that is either empowering or disempowering for those who work and learn there (Nieto, 2005). The curriculum should be integrated, interdisciplinary, meaningful, and student-centered. It should include issues and topics related to the students' background and culture, and it should challenge the students to develop higher-order knowledge and skills (Villegas, 1991).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between urban teachers' demographics, experience, and perceptions and those teachers' implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom. Specifically, this study examined the influences of ethnicity, age, teaching experience, education, professional development, and prior exposure to culturally diverse populations on perceptions of implementing culturally responsive materials in urban elementary classrooms. The study was conducted in an urban school district located in a metropolitan area in Northeast Harris County, Texas.

The school district is taking a leadership role in preparing students to compete and succeed in the new global economy. Higher expectations were set by the district, and over the course of the first year, students delivered outstanding results. The district is continually developing innovative programs to help students become better prepared for college so they can compete and succeed in the global marketplace.

Research Design

The purpose of this research design was to provide a clear, accurate description of individuals, events, and processes involved in the collection of numerical data to answer research questions and develop a precise account of a population's perceptions and personal characteristics (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The survey design used in this study included a questionnaire that was used to collect information about research participants' age, gender, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, education level, and

prior exposure to multicultural education. The design entailed mailed questionnaires to collect information from a large sample and used a combination of methods to increase the reliability of the data collected.

Like other research designs, survey research has its methodological weaknesses. One of the key weaknesses in the survey design is that the information created often lacks sufficient depth. This type of research design has several advantages that tend to outweigh its disadvantages when the purpose is to include a wider range of subjects than other designs offer. According to Selltiz, Wrightman, and Cook (1986), these advantages enable the researcher to collect detailed information that describes existing perceptions and identify problems that explain current conditions, behaviors, and practices that exist within a population. Kerlinger (1986) suggests that the methodology of survey research can be conceived as an inquiry into the uniformity or regularity of some phenomena. A survey design provides the most effective, efficient, and economical means for studying the perceptions of urban elementary teachers regarding the implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom because it allows for the collection of data across a wider range of participants. Since the purpose of this study was to generalize results to a much larger population of urban teachers, the survey design made it more likely that a sample of the population represented the population well (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991).

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their age group?

2. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their ethnic group?
3. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their years of teaching experience?
4. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of education?
5. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of professional development in multicultural education?
6. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of prior knowledge with culturally diverse populations?

Instrument

A Culturally Responsive Material Survey (CRMS) was created by the researcher after an extensive review of extant literature. Using 12 indicators, this survey captures subjects' positive perceptions of implementing culturally responsive materials in the classroom. The content validity of this instrument was established by soliciting the opinions of professors who are experts in the fields of education, methodology, and instrument creation.

Items on the CRMS were captured using a five-point Likert scale. This five-point scale asked subjects to rate their perception of each item as (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) No Opinion, (4) Agree, or (5) Strongly Agree. The Likert scale is the most common response format and was chosen for this study because it allows for observable variability in responses across multiple items (Patten, 2004).

A seven-item Background Information Survey (BIS) was also generated by the researcher to capture the constructs of gender, ethnicity, age, teaching experience, and education level. Gender was captured by simply asking the subject to indicate his/her gender (male/female). Ethnicity was captured by asking the subject to indicate whether he/she was African American, Anglo American, Asian, Hispanic, or other. If the respondent chose the other category, a discursive section asked the subject to indicate his/her ethnicity. The BIS captured age by asking the respondent to indicate into which age category he/she belonged. Possible responses included (a) 25 or less, (b) 26 to 35, (c) 36 to 45, or (d) 46 and above. These categories were selected for two reasons. First, by nature of the ANOVA, categorical variables are needed to conduct the analyses. Unlike linear regression that only uses continuous variables and cross-tabs that only use categorical variables, the ANOVA uses a mix of categorical and continuous data. Consequently, categories must be used to conduct the analysis. Second, the purpose of the research question related to age and valuation of culturally responsive materials is to see if age can be used to predict such valuation. Organizing ages into these categories allows clear distinctions among younger, intermediate, and older teachers. In this way,

analyses, recommendations, and implications are easier to envision and grasp among the four categories.

This survey also captured years of teaching experience by asking subjects to indicate into which teaching experience category he/she belonged. Possible responses included (a) novice teacher (5 years or less), (b) moderately experienced teacher (6 to 11 years), (c) experienced teacher (12 to 15 years), or (d) veteran teacher (16 years or more). Finally, the BIS asked respondents to indicate their highest level of education. Possible responses included (a) Bachelor's, (b) Master's, (c) Doctorate, or (d) Other. If the respondent chose the other category, a discursive section asked the subject to indicate the highest education level he/she had obtained.

Population/Sample

Collection of data took place in an urban elementary school district located within a major metropolitan area in northeast Harris County, Texas. Minorities predominately reside in this urban educational district made up of a large percentage of economically disadvantaged students. Neighboring districts with similar demographics have a higher tax rate, but this particular district does not have the labor market, commercial investment, or real estate necessary to justify collection of more tax revenue. According to the Texas Education Agency (2007), only 16.3% of this district's revenue is collected from local tax funds from assessed property value. This district covers 33 square miles and serves 9,967 students in pre-kindergarten through 12 grades on 13 campuses. Employing 701 teachers in 2007, the district operates seven elementary schools, three middle schools, two high schools, one career and technology school, and

the Learning Academy that houses students unable to function successfully in the traditional educational setting (Fast Facts, n.d.).

The district employs full and part-time employees who are assigned to schools and services directly associated with educating students. These employees serve as substitute teachers or provide specialized support services. Of the teacher population, there are 602 (85.8%) African Americans, 66 (9.5%) Asian/Pacific Islanders, 29 (4.1%) Whites, and 4 (0.6%) Hispanics (Texas Education Agency, 2007). Table 3.1 summarizes the ethnic makeup of the district's teacher population.

Table 3.1. Demographics of the Urban District Teacher Population

Ethnicity	N	Percent of Total Population
African American	602	85.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	66	9.5
White	29	4.1
Hispanic	4	0.6
Total	701	100.0

Of the total student population, there are 7,349 (73.7%) African Americans, 2,548 (25.6%) Hispanics, 59 (0.6%) Whites, and 11 (0.1%) Asian/Pacific Islanders (Texas Education Agency, 2008). Table 3.2 summarizes the ethnic makeup of the district's student population.

Table 3.2. Ethnicity of the Urban District's Student Population Sample

Ethnicity	N	Percent of Total Population
African American	7,349	73.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	2,548	25.6
White	59	0.6
Hispanic	11	0.1
Total	9,967	100.0

Elementary school teachers were chosen as the focus of this study for three main reasons. First, primary school includes first through fifth grades in most educational systems throughout the country. Unlike middle school (grades 6 through 8) and high school (grades 9 through 12), elementary schools provide a larger pool from which to draw samples. Second, it is in the early years of a child's education where deep-rooted beliefs begin to form and exploration of new and unfamiliar people and events takes place (Davies, 2004). It is in elementary school where young minds are most influenced by culturally responsive curricula. Therefore, it is the most logical place to begin exploring the antecedents to teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive materials. Third, elementary teachers spend more time with their students than do middle or high school teachers. Consequently, they are in a better position to observe the impact of race in the classroom and to hold a stronger opinion on the value of culturally responsive materials.

The majority of teachers chosen for the sample do not represent the dominant White culture that is often blamed for a lack of culturally diverse approaches to teaching culturally diverse student populations. Anecdotally, a predominantly White teacher population can explain why students not represented by the dominant culture struggle to learn in a social system foreign to them. One aim of this research is to shed light on the sources of culturally responsive materials while considering race as a factor. By choosing a predominantly African American sample, this study seeks to better understand whether culturally diverse materials' valuation in a culture is more highly valued than in one represented by the dominant White population.

Data Collection

Once approval to conduct research was granted by the Institution Review Board (IRB) Protocol, the researcher mailed a letter (Appendix A) to the Director of Research in the target school district. Once the permission was granted, the dean of instruction for each campus was contacted to review the study. At that meeting, a letter review outlined the methodology and procedures to be used (Appendix B). The dean of instruction of each elementary school was given a set of questionnaires (Appendix C) and timelines were determined. The procedure for administering the survey involved a two-fold process. First, the teachers were given a research packet including a letter regarding the purpose of the research and requesting their participation. Secondly, a pre-addressed envelope was provided for the return of two survey instruments to the investigator. The teachers were asked to respond honestly to all items on the survey to eliminate non-

responses. For statistical purposes, the researcher utilized applications from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data.

Data Analysis

One-hundred and forty-three (143) participants returned completed surveys and were included in all subsequent analyses. Of these participants, 108 (75.5%) were African American, 14 (9.8%) were Asian American, 12 (8.4%) were Hispanic American, and 9 (6.3%) were Anglo American. Table 3.3 summarizes this data.

Table 3.3. Sample Frequency Distribution of Participants by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	N	Percent
African American	108	75.5
Asian American	14	9.8
Hispanic American	12	8.4
Anglo American	9	6.3
Total	143	100.0

The survey used in this research included 19 items capturing seven variables and one latent construct. The seven variables included gender, ethnicity, age, teaching experience, level of education, level of professional development, and level of prior knowledge. Items for these variables are summarized in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Survey Items for the Seven Survey Variables

Variable	Item	Responses
Gender	What is your gender?	Male, Female
Ethnicity	What is your ethnicity?	African American, Anglo American, Asian, Hispanic, Other (Please be Specific)
Age	What is your age?	25 or less, 26 to 35, 36 to 45, 46 and above
Teaching Experience	How many years of teaching experience do you have?	Novice; 5 years or less, Moderately experiences; 6 to 11 years, Experiences; 12 to 15 years, Veteran; 16 years and more
Level of Education	What is your level of education?	Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate, Other (Please be Specific)
Level of Professional Development	What is your level of professional development in multicultural education?	A course in multicultural education, More than one course in multicultural education, Teaching experience in an urban school
Level of Prior Knowledge	What is your level of prior knowledge?	Attended a high school that reflected a culturally diverse population, Worked with a culturally diverse population, Had a friendship with a person from another culture, Attended a college that reflected a culturally diverse population

The perceptions of culturally responsive materials construct was captured using 12 items. Participants rated the items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). These 12 items were averaged to obtain estimation of this latent construct. The items used to capture perceptions culturally responsive materials are summarized in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5. Survey Items for Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Materials

Item	Perception
1	Culturally responsive materials and materials are increasingly becoming a part of your teaching and curriculum.
2	A well designed continuing staff development program is essential for the development and implementation of culturally responsive materials into the curriculum.
3	Culturally responsive materials in the classroom should be implemented with teaching strategies that are interactive, personalized, and cooperative.
4	It is essential that students be given ample opportunities to express their feelings and emotions and to interact with their peers and classmates when culturally responsive materials are implemented.
5	Teaching methods need to be readjusted to incorporate culturally responsive materials and materials in the classroom.
6	Teaching to students' cultural backgrounds will help them understand the objectives being taught.
7	It is the responsibility of the teacher to assist students by implementing culturally responsive materials in the classroom that represent the cultures of their students.
8	As the student population becomes more culturally diverse, the classroom environment should become more receptive to students from diverse backgrounds.
9	In order to become a more effective teacher, one needs to be aware of culturally responsive materials.
10	Using culturally responsive materials in the classroom can help a teacher work more effectively with a diverse student population.
11	Awareness of culturally responsive materials and their uses will improve relations among students from diverse backgrounds.
12	The implementation of culturally responsive materials is relevant for the subject you teach.

The scale for this instrument has been categorized in the following manner: curriculum and instruction, items, 1, 9 and 10; implementation of culturally responsive materials, items 3, 7, and 12; cultural awareness, 4, 6, and 11; and professional development, 2, 5, and 8.

Before analysis of substantive relationships between the variables can be conducted, it must first be determined whether the items used to measure culturally responsive materials represent an accurate measure of the underlying construct. The culturally responsive variable is a latent construct that cannot be observed directly (Byrne, 1988). Using indicators to estimate the construct, the internal consistency of the items as a group must be evaluated before further analysis (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991).

To assess the reliability of the culturally responsive materials construct, a Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Cronbach, 1984) was calculated. Cronbach's Alpha is a commonly used coefficient of reliability that indicates how well multiple items measure the same underlying construct. To further evaluate the construct under study, each item was removed one-by-one from the analysis to determine the increase or decrease of reliability that could be obtained by elimination of the item from estimation of the construct. Using this analysis, it is possible to determine whether an item is reducing the reliability of the estimation because it is a poor indicator of the culturally responsive materials construct.

Substantive analysis of the research questions was conducted using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) coupled with the Bonferroni post hoc tests. Unlike linear regression that is appropriate when the variables under study are all continuous or cross tabulation

coupled with the chi-square test that is appropriate when all variables under study are categorical, the ANOVA is appropriate when the variables under study are a mixture of continuous and categorical. The research questions in this study were developed to examine the differences that occur in perceptions of culturally responsive materials (continuous variable) across age, ethnicity, teaching experience, education level, professional development, and experience with culturally diverse populations (categorical variables). Therefore, ANOVA indicates not only the magnitude of the relationship (F-statistic) between culturally responsive materials and each of the categorical variables, it also reveals the significance level (p-value) given the degrees of freedom in each analysis. A total of six ANOVA analyses were conducted to correspond to the six research questions in this study.

The ANOVA does present a limitation when evaluating substantive effects across categorical variables consisting of more than two categories of data. In an evaluation of more than two categories, the ANOVA can only reveal whether at least one of the categories significantly differs from the others. It does not reveal which categories are different from the others and whether multiple categories are different from one another. Another analysis is necessary to determine which categories are measurably and statistically different (Scheffer, 1995).

One solution to this problem could be to conduct separate t-test analyses on each of the pairs in the focal category. Unfortunately, this is inadequate because assumptions about acceptable levels of random error would be compounded with each subsequent analysis. The researcher must adjust the statistically significant cutoff point (p-value) to

account for this compounding and avoid the increased chances of making a Type I error (Kerlinger, 1986).

The Bonferroni post hoc test addresses the problem of multiple comparisons with an adjustment of the alpha level (p-value) by dividing the desired p-value (0.05 in this study) by the number of potential implicit (pairwise) comparisons (Abdi, 2007). Then, a series of t-tests comparing each pair of categories in the analysis helps the researcher determine not only whether differences exist among the categories, but where those differences exist. This inferential method of evaluating categorical data in an ANOVA is simultaneously superior to the ANOVA alone and conducting a series of unadjusted t-tests where the possibility of a Type I error increases with each addition of a pairwise statistical comparison (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991).

Summary

This chapter described the methodology used to examine the data collected. An overview of the target population, the research design, and procedures for conducting the research were discussed. Data collection and data analysis methods procedures were provided.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter provides the results for the six research questions in this study.

Chapter IV is divided into five parts. Part one provides an overview of the data analysis.

Parts two through four present a summary of the responses to each of the six research questions. The last part provides a synopsis of the results to each research question.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their age group?
2. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their ethnic group?
3. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their years of teaching experience?
4. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of education?
5. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of professional development in multicultural education?

6. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of prior knowledge with culturally diverse populations?

Data Analysis

One-hundred and forty-three (143) participants returned completed surveys and were included in all subsequent analyses. Of these participants, 108 (75.5%) were African American, 14 (9.8%) were Asian American, 12 (8.4%) were Hispanic American, and 9 (6.3%) were Anglo American.

The survey used in this research included 19 items capturing seven variables and one latent construct. The seven variables included gender, ethnicity, age, teaching experience, level of education, level of professional development, and level of prior knowledge.

The perceptions of culturally responsive materials construct was captured using 12 items. Participants rated the items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). These 12 items were averaged to obtain estimation of this latent construct. Before analysis of substantive relationships between the variables can be conducted, it must first be determined whether the items used to measure culturally responsive materials represent an accurate measure of the underlying construct. The culturally responsive variable is a latent construct that cannot be observed directly (Byrne, 1988). Using indicators to estimate the construct, the internal consistency of the items as a group must be evaluated before further analysis (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991).

To assess the reliability of the culturally responsive materials construct, a Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Cronbach, 1984) was calculated. Cronbach's Alpha is a commonly used coefficient of reliability that indicates how well multiple items measure the same underlying construct. To further evaluate the construct under study, each item was removed one-by-one from the analysis to determine the increase or decrease of reliability that could be obtained by elimination of the item from estimation of the construct. Using this analysis, it is possible to determine whether an item is reducing the reliability of the estimation because it is a poor indicator of the culturally responsive materials construct.

Substantive analysis of the research questions was conducted using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) coupled with the Bonferroni post hoc tests. Unlike linear regression that is appropriate when the variables under study are all continuous or cross tabulation coupled with the chi-square test that is appropriate when all variables under study are categorical, the ANOVA is appropriate when the variables under study are a mixture of continuous and categorical. The research questions in this study were developed to examine the differences that occur in perceptions of culturally responsive materials (continuous variable) across age, ethnicity, teaching experience, education level, professional development, and experience with culturally diverse populations (categorical variables). Therefore, ANOVA indicates not only the magnitude of the relationship (F-statistic) between culturally responsive materials and each of the categorical variables, it also reveals the significance level (p-value) given the degrees of

freedom in each analysis. A total of six ANOVA analyses were conducted to correspond to the six research questions in this study.

The ANOVA does present a limitation when evaluating substantive effects across categorical variables consisting of more than two categories of data. In an evaluation of more than two categories, the ANOVA can only reveal whether at least one of the categories significantly differs from the others. It does not reveal which categories are different from the others and whether multiple categories are different from one another. Another analysis is necessary to determine which categories are measurably and statistically different (Scheffer, 1995).

One solution to this problem could be to conduct separate t-test analyses on each of the pairs in the focal category. Unfortunately, this is inadequate because assumptions about acceptable levels of random error would be compounded with each subsequent analysis. The researcher must adjust the statistically significant cutoff point (p-value) to account for this compounding and avoid the increased chances of making a Type I error (Kerlinger, 1986).

The Bonferroni post hoc test addresses the problem of multiple comparisons with an adjustment of the alpha level (p-value) by dividing the desired p-value (0.05 in this study) by the number of potential implicit (pairwise) comparisons (Abdi, 2007). Then, a series of t-tests comparing each pair of categories in the analysis helps the researcher determine not only whether differences exist among the categories, but where those differences exist. This inferential method of evaluating categorical data in an ANOVA is simultaneously superior to the ANOVA alone and conducting a series of unadjusted t-

tests where the possibility of a Type I error increases with each addition of a pairwise statistical comparison (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991).

Data were analyzed using ANOVA with a Bonferroni post hoc test to evaluate the differences of teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive materials across age groups, ethnic groups, teaching experience, education levels, professional development, and prior knowledge with culturally diverse populations. F-statistics and p-values for the ANOVA are presented and the Bonferroni t-test pairwise comparison analyses are reported as a p-value measuring statistical significance at the adjusted p-value level. For research question 4 (education level), only two categories of data were collected (bachelor's and master's degrees). Therefore, the Bonferroni post hoc test cannot be calculated. For this research question, only the ANOVA statistics are reported.

Reliability

As discussed in Chapter III, it was necessary to assess the ability of the items for the culturally responsive materials variable to measure the intended construct. To assess this reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was calculated to obtain a measure of internal consistency. In much of the social science research, at least half of the internal variability of a group of items must be accounted for as measurement of the underlying construct before the measure is considered adequate. This equates to an approximate 0.7071 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. However, Rosenthal and Rosnow (1991) point out that:

For purposes of clinical testing, reliability coefficients of approximately .85 or higher may be considered as indicative of dependable psychological tests, whereas in experimental research, instruments with much lower reliability coefficients may be accepted as satisfactory. (p. 50)

Consequently, a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.7071 would be adequate, while a coefficient of 0.85 or above would be more than adequate. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the 12 culturally responsive materials construct items was calculated to be 0.9204, a value in excess of what Rosenthal and Rosnow (1991) recommend for “dependable psychological tests” in the social sciences (p. 50).

As an added step in evaluating reliability of the culturally responsive materials construct items, 12 additional reliability coefficients were calculated, each with the removal of one item from the total of 12 items for each analysis. Results indicate that except for the removal of item one, removal of a single item does not increase the reliability coefficient. With respect to item one, removal of this item increases the coefficient from 0.9204 to 0.9238, an insignificant amount to consider removing the item from the analysis because of unreliability. Consequently, all items appear to adequately measure the underlying culturally responsive materials construct and were all used in estimation of this latent variable. The full results of the reliability analyses are shown in Table 4.1.

Substantive Analyses

To assess the research questions as introduced in Chapter II, ANOVA and Bonferroni post hoc analyses were conducted for each of the six categorical variables. What follows are the results of these analyses.

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers’ perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their age group?

Table 4.1. Results of Reliability Analyses

Eliminated Item	Alpha if Item Deleted
1	0.9238
2	0.9137
3	0.9134
4	0.9134
5	0.9174
6	0.9127
7	0.9133
8	0.9128
9	0.9107
10	0.9115
11	0.9115
12	0.9112

Presented in Table 4.2 are the mean and standard deviation results regarding the perceptions of elementary school teachers toward the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials across their age groups. The mean perception score for elementary teachers who were 25 years of age or less was 52.50 (SD=4.75) and for those who were between the ages 26 to 35, the mean score was 54.252 (SD=5.84). Likewise, the mean perception score for elementary teachers who were between the ages of 36 to 45 was 51.87 (SD=3.89). Finally, the average perception score of elementary teachers who were 46 years of age or above was 50.08 (SD=8.26).

Table 4.2. Mean and Standard Deviations Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Material in the Classroom by Age

Variable (Age)	Mean	Standard Deviation
25 or less	52.50	4.75
26 to 35	54.52	5.84
36 to 45	51.87	3.89
46 plus	50.08	8.26
Total	51.41	7.26

Reported in Table 4.3 are the Analysis of Variance results toward the implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom. The differences in the obtained perception scores of the four age groups of teachers ($F=2.897$, $df=3/142$, $P>.05$) were significant at the .05 level.

Table 4.3. Analysis of Variance Table Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Materials in the Classroom by Age

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	440.216	3	146.739	2.897	.037*
Within Groups	7040.260	139	50.649		
Total	7480.476	142			

* $p<.05$.

These results suggest that valuation of culturally responsive materials is a function of teacher age. In particular, it appears that members of a younger age category value culturally responsive materials more highly than older teachers in another category. Younger teachers are part of a different generation than older teachers. Younger teachers, therefore, were naturally part of a more diverse culture during their adolescence and education years. Embedded in more highly diverse social situations, younger teachers are naturally more sensitive to and more aware of the need for culturally diverse methods of teaching and learning. In line with these arguments, it is not surprising that there was a significant result found when comparing the valuation of culturally responsive materials by teachers' ages.

Moreover, further data analysis using the Bonferroni test as a follow-up test (Table 4.4) revealed that elementary teachers who were between the ages of 26 to 35,

had significantly more favorable perceptions of implementing culturally responsive materials in the classroom than their counterparts who were 46 years of age or older. No other pair-wise comparison (mean differences) between the age groups was found to be significant.

Table 4.4. Results of Bonferroni Analysis for Age (RQ1)

Mean 1 25 or less	Mean 2 26 to 35	Mean 3 36 to 45	Mean 4 46 plus	Observed Mean Difference	P
52.50	54.52			-2.02	1.000
52.50		51.87		.63	1.000
52.50			50.08	2.42	1.000
	54.52	51.87		2.65	1.000
	54.52		50.08	4.44	.027*
		51.87	50.08	1.79	1.000

* $p < .05$.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their ethnic group?

The mean and standard deviations results were computed for elementary school teachers across ethnic groups with respect to perceptions toward implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials. As revealed in Table 4.5, the mean perception scores for African American and Anglo American elementary teachers were 51.35 (SD=7.42) and 49.56 (SD=8.52), respectively. Asian elementary school teachers had a mean perception score of 51.86 (SD=6.88) and for their Hispanic counterparts, their mean perception score was 52.75 (SD=5.56)

Table 4.5. Mean and Standard Deviations Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Material in the Classroom by Ethnicity

Variable (Ethnicity)	Mean	Standard Deviation
African American	51.35	7.42
Anglo American	49.56	8.52
Asian American	51.86	6.88
Hispanic American	52.75	5.56
Total	51.41	7.26

This study used a sample predominantly made up of African American subjects. As a minority, African Americans are likely well aware of the effects of the dominant culture on the learning of minority students. Consequently, it is likely, as was found in this study that little variability in the valuation of culturally responsive materials would be observed in such as sample. In line with this justification, this study suggests that valuation of culturally responsive materials is not a function of ethnicity.

Revealed in Table 4.6 are the One-Way Analysis of Variance results regarding the perceptions of elementary teacher's perceptions toward the implementation of culturally diverse materials into the classroom by their ethnicity. The difference in the obtained perception scores regarding the implementation of culturally diverse materials into the classroom with respect to different ethnic groups of teachers ($F=.347$, $df=3/139$, $P>.05$) was not significant at the .05 level. Therefore, elementary teachers' ethnicity had no influence on their perceptions of implementing culturally diverse materials into the classroom.

Table 4.6. Analysis of Variance Table Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Materials in the Classroom by Ethnicity

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	55.659	3	18.553	.347	.791
Within Groups	7424.816	139	53.416		
Total	7480.476	142			

* $p < .05$.

Research Question 3

What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their years of teaching experience?

The mean years of teaching experience for elementary school teachers was presented in Table 4.7. The novice (5 years or less) elementary school teachers had a mean perception score of 52.89 (SD=5.58). On the other hand, the moderately experienced elementary teachers (6 to 11 years) had a mean perception score of 54.28 (SD=4.34).

Table 4.7. Mean and Standard Deviations Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Material in the Classroom by Years of Teaching Experience

Variable (Years)	Mean	Standard Deviation
5 years or less	52.89	5.58
6 to 11 years	54.28	4.34
12 to 15 years	51.86	1.61
16 or more years	49.36	9.01
Total	51.41	7.26

The experienced elementary teachers (12 to 15 years) had a mean perception score of 51.86 (SD=1.61) and the mean perception score for the veteran elementary teachers (16 years and above) was 49.36 (SD=9.01).

Presented in Table 4.8 are the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results pertaining to elementary teachers' training in multicultural education and their attitudes toward the implementation of culturally diverse materials into the classroom.

Statistically significant differences were found between the three training groups of teachers and their attitudes toward the implantation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom at the .05 level ($F=3.814$, $df=3/139$, $P<.05$).

Table 4.8. Analysis of Variance Table Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Materials in the Classroom by Years of Teaching

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	568.870	3	189.623	3.814	.012*
Within Groups	6911.606	139	49.724		
Total	7480.476	142			

* $p<.05$.

Further, Bonferroni, the multiple comparison test (Table 4.9) revealed that elementary teachers who had 6 to 11 years of teaching experience had a significantly more favorable perception than those elementary teachers who had 16 or more years of teaching experience. No other pair-wise comparisons (mean differences) between teaching experience groups were found significant.

Table 4.9. Results of Bonferroni Analysis for Experience (RQ3)

Mean 1 5 years or less	Mean 2 6 to 11 years	Mean 3 12 to 15 years	Mean 4 16 yrs or more	Observed Mean Difference	P
52.89	54.28			-1.39	1.000
52.89		51.86		1.04	1.000
52.89			49.36	3.53	.091
	54.28	51.86		2.42	1.000
	54.28		49.36	4.92	.021*
		51.86	49.36	2.50	1.000

*p<.05.

It was expected that a relationship between age and valuation of culturally responsive materials would be observed in this study. As it turns out, there is likely a strong correlation between a teacher's age and his/her experience teaching. For example, it would be impossible for a teacher of 25 years to have 30 years of teaching experience. Although possible, it is unlikely that a teacher of 60 years would have only a few years teaching experience. Consequently, there is likely a strong correlation between a teacher's age and his/her teaching experience. Given the findings for Research Question 1, it is not surprising here that a strong relationship was found between teaching experience and valuation of culturally responsive materials. This finding bolsters the idea that younger and less experienced teachers are likely to place higher value on the implementation of culturally responsive materials.

Research Question 4

What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementations of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of education?

Shown in 4.10 were the mean and standard deviation results pertaining to the perceptions of elementary school teachers toward the implementation of culturally responsive teaching material by level of education. The mean perception score for elementary teachers with a bachelor's degree was 52.69 (SD=7.14). In contrast, the mean perception score for elementary teachers with a master's degree was 50.63 (SD=7.26).

Table 4.10. Mean and Standard Deviations Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Material in the Classroom by Years of Level of Education

Variable (Education)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Bachelor's Degree	52.69	7.14
Masters Degree	50.63	7.26
Total	51.41	7.26

Indicated in Table 4.11 are the Analysis of Variance results regarding elementary teachers' level of education and their perceptions toward the implementation of culturally diverse materials into the classroom. A significant difference was not found between the two levels of education groups of elementary teachers and their perceptions toward implementing culturally diverse materials in the classroom ($F=2.730$, $df=1/141$, $P>.05$) at the .05 level.

Table 4.11. Analysis of Variance Table Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Materials in the Classroom by Level of Education

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	142.063	1	142.063	2.730	.101
Within Groups	7338.412	141	52.045		
Total	7480.476	142			

The results indicated that the relationship between urban teachers' perceptions and their implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom. A significant difference was not found between the four levels of education level groups and implementing culturally diverse materials in the classroom. Thus, the educational level has no impact on elementary teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of culturally diverse materials into the classroom.

One reason for this finding may be that sensitivity to culture diversity is not taught differently at various levels of education. The master's degree is not simply more education beyond the bachelor's degree but involves higher-level learning. Evidence to support this can be found in the myriad of entrance requirements and standardized testing necessary for acceptance into graduate level programs. In response to the findings in this study regarding education level and valuation of culturally responsive materials, it appears that exposure to culture diversity and its various peripheral subjects is no more prevalent in master's degree programs than it is in bachelor's degree programs. Although more research is needed to conclude this supposition, this study does support that contention.

Research Question 5

What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of professional development in multicultural education?

Indicated in Table 4.12 were the mean and standard deviation results with regard to the elementary school teacher's perceptions toward the implementation of culturally

responsive teaching materials by professional development in multicultural education.

The mean perception score of elementary school teachers who had a course in multicultural education was 46.67 (SD=7.39), and the mean score for elementary school teachers who had more than one course in multicultural education was 57.74 (SD=7.36). Furthermore, the mean perception score of elementary school teachers who had teaching experience in an urban school was 52.12 (SD=6.89).

Table 4.12. Mean and Standard Deviations Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Material in the Classroom by Level of Professional Development in Multicultural Education

Variable (Training)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Took 1 Course	46.67	7.39
Took More than 1 Course	51.74	7.36
Taught in Urban School	52.12	6.89
Total	51.41	7.26

The One-Way ANOVA results pertaining to the influence of professional development in multicultural education had on the perceptions of elementary teachers toward the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials in the classroom were presented in Table 4.13. As shown in this table, statistically significant differences were found between three professional development groups of elementary teachers ($F=3.755$, $df=2/140$, $P<.05$) at the .05 level. Accordingly, elementary teachers' professional development had some influence on their perceptions toward the implementation of culturally responsive teaching.

Table 4.13. Analysis of Variance Table Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Materials in the Classroom by Level of Professional Development in Multicultural Education

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	380.866	2	190.433	3.755	.026*
Within Groups	7099.609	140	50.711		
Total	7480.476	142			

* $p < .05$.

The results of my study suggest that CRM valuation is not equally distributed across three categories of professional development. Specifically, subjects who indicated having taken more than one course in multicultural education perceived CRM higher than those subjects who indicated that they took just one course in multicultural education. Similarly, those subjects who indicated that they have multicultural teaching experience value CRM more than those subjects who indicated that they took just one course in multicultural education. Clearly, one course seems inadequate to maximize CRM valuation in comparison to multi-course or multicultural teaching experience.

This finding, however, is not conclusive from a causation point of view. Simply because a correlation was found between professional development and perceptions of CRM, no causal relationship can be inferred. It is possible that people who already valued or were concerned about diversity were drawn to multiple courses in multicultural education and the teaching of students in a multicultural education. This predisposition may also affect a teacher's valuation of CRM regardless of any professional development experiences. The positive relationship between courses and

CRM and multicultural teaching experience and CRM may only be a spurious rather than a substantive one.

Research suggests that higher levels of exposure to a subject create better retention and higher levels of recognition (Durrant & Schmidt, 2010). In line with these results, this research suggests that more exposure and relevant exposure are two factors contributing to higher levels in the valuation of culturally responsive materials. Consequently, perceptions of culturally responsive materials may be a function of exposure to both the main topic of these materials and the periphery topics that contribute understanding of their purpose. As this study suggests, both formal and informal exposure to cultural diversity correlates with valuation of culturally responsive materials. Therefore, this study aligns with extant literature on how exposure enhances recognition and recall.

Moreover, the Bonferroni test (Table 4.14) revealed that elementary teachers who took a course in multicultural education had a significantly less favorable perception toward the implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom than those elementary teachers who took more than one course in multicultural education or teaching experience in an urban school. No other pair-wise (mean differences) comparison between professional development groups of teachers were found significant.

Table 4.14. Results of Bonferroni Analysis for Professional Development (RQ5)

Mean 1 A Course	Mean 2 More than one Course	Mean 3 Urban School	Observed Mean Difference	P
46.67	51.7		-5.07	.048*
46.67		52.12	-5.45	.023*
	51.7	52.12	-.380	1.000

*p<.05.

Research Question 6

What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of prior knowledge with culturally diverse populations?

The mean and standard deviation results were calculated on the perceptions of elementary school teachers toward the implementation of cultural responsive teaching materials as it relates to their level of prior knowledge. As shown in Table 4.15, the mean perception score of elementary school teachers who had attended a high school that reflected a culturally diverse student population was 54.14 (SD=4.40) and for those elementary school teachers who had worked with a culturally diverse population, the mean was 50.91 (SD=6.52).

Table 4.15. Mean and Standard Deviations Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Material in the Classroom by Level of Prior Knowledge with Culturally Diverse Populations

Variable (Prior Knowledge)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Diverse High school	54.14	4.40
Diverse Workplace	50.91	6.52
Diverse Friendships	51.67	6.78
Diverse College	50.61	9.14
Total	51.41	7.26

Additionally, the mean perception score of elementary school teachers who had a friendship with a person from another culture was 51.67 (SD=6.78). In addition, the mean perception score of elementary school teachers who had attended a college that reflected a culturally diverse student population was 50.61 (SD=9.14).

The results of my study suggest that the education level of teachers does not affect valuation of CRM. Teachers holding a bachelor's degree did not perceive CRM differently than those teachers who completed a master's degree program. Although no significant finding was found according to education level, this finding does have at least one important consequence on the relationship between education and a teacher's perceived value of CRM.

If bachelor's degree holders do not perceive CRM differently than master's degree holders, then we may conclude that pedagogy at higher levels of education are neither focusing more or less attention on CRM than the lower levels. In other words, CRM and related pedagogical foci are taught similarly at the two levels of education. Of course, the question remains whether there should be different foci at the two different levels. Supposedly, a master's degree program is not simply more education; it is truly a higher level of education that digs deeper into a subject area. This research suggests that the focus on CRM is not different between the two levels because perceptions of CRM are not distributed differently according to education level. Consequently, this research may have tapped into an underdeveloped portion of master's degree programs of failing to promote diversity more intensely at the higher educational levels.

Missing from this research was the ability to examine those teachers who hold doctoral degrees; no subject in the study responded as holding such a degree.

Consequently, there is no way to determine whether universities reserve diversity education for terminal degree status and whether such status should be taught more intensely at the lower levels.

Illustrated in Table 4.16, were the One-Way Analysis of Variance results regarding the influence of prior knowledge on the perceptions of elementary teachers toward the implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom. No statistically significant differences were found between the perceptions of the four prior knowledge groups by elementary teachers ($F=1.274$, $df=3/139$, $P>.05$) at the .05 level. Based on the above findings, prior knowledge had no influence on the perceptions of teachers toward the implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom.

Table 4.16. Analysis of Variance Table Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Materials in the Classroom by Level of Prior knowledge with Culturally Diverse Populations

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	200.244	3	66.748	1.274	.286
Within Groups	7280.231	139	52.376		
Total	7480.476	142			

Summary

Results of this study suggest that some differences among categories within the six research questions do exist. Using ANOVA analyses and the Bonferroni post hoc test, differences among categories with subjects' age (Research Question 1), teaching

experience (Research Question 3), and professional development (Research Question 5) exist with respect to perceiving value in culturally responsive materials. In contrast, no significant differences were found among categories with subjects' ethnic group (Research Question 2), education level (Research Question 4), or diverse knowledge with multicultural issues (Research Question 6).

In Chapter V, these findings are examined in light of both current literature and future research directions. In particular, a framework for developing new directions for administrators and teachers is presented.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUMMARY

Multicultural literature helps students understand their own culture to a greater degree and serves as a window to new cultures. Being exposed to multicultural literature allows the student to see life through the eyes of other persons in other societies. Through the study of multicultural education, students learn that people's behavior is influenced by their culture. They learn to realize that what is considered right, moral, or appropriate in one culture may not be so in another culture (Koeppen & Davison-Jenkins, 2006). Through multicultural education, students understand that the differences between cultural backgrounds can often be superficial and that there are common universal values respected by all human beings across linguistic, cultural, and national boundaries.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between urban teachers' perceptions and their implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom. Specifically, this study examined the influences of age, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, education level, professional development, and prior knowledge with culturally diverse populations on perceptions of implementing culturally responsive materials in urban elementary classrooms.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their age group?
2. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their ethnic group?
3. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their years of teaching experience?
4. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of education?
5. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of professional development in multicultural education?
6. What is the relationship between urban elementary school teachers' perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching materials and their level of prior knowledge with culturally diverse populations?

Discussion of Results

Research Question 1 – Age

The results of this study suggest that CRM valuation is distributed according to the age group to which a respondent belongs. Specifically, people in the 26 to 35 year old age group valued CRM more than people who were 46 years of age or older. This suggests that younger people will typically view CRM more favorably than older people. These results may be for two reasons. First, the older subjects in this research belong to a different generation than the younger teachers. Newer generations have been formally exposed to diversity and to value different cultures, perspectives, and points of view. The younger generations learned this from a young age and more naturally accept people and equality to be a part of the socialization process.

Second, younger teachers completed their education under different conditions than older teachers. Most universities today have formal processes and rules in place to ensure equal treatment. This is especially true for state and public universities where equality is a necessity under state law. Consequently, the younger generations were formally taught to value diversity and equality when it comes to both political and socialization processes.

Combined, we see that acceptance of diversity and equality have been taught to younger generations both formally in the education system and informally in the socialization process of growing up in a more tolerant time. Consequently, it can be expected that younger generations are better able to recognize and value CRM as an important tool with which to reach children in the elementary education system.

Surprisingly, subjects in the 25 years of age or less category do not appear to value CRM more or less than the other age groups. However, in this particular research, the number of individuals occupying that category was only eight subjects. This finding may be due more to an inadequate sample size rather than a substantive effect.

Using age as a variable, research suggests that environmental as well as cognitive factors affect perceptions of racial tolerance and prejudice (Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996). The finding in this study that a perception of culturally responsive materials is distributed by age is, therefore, not surprising. Other research points out that racial tolerance did not decrease in recent decades (Schuman & Steeh, 1985). As bolstered by the current study, age is an important factor when determining the perceptions of race and race-related issues such as the value of culturally responsive materials in the elementary classroom.

Research Question 2 – Ethnic Group

The results of this study suggest that the ethnic groups to which subjects belong do not influence perceptions of implementation of CRM in the classroom. This finding parallels the work of Boyd (2002) whose research suggests that ethnicity and other demographic information does affect urban elementary teachers' perceptions of implementing multicultural education materials in the classroom.

However, at least a portion of this finding may be due to the subjects who participated in the study. The majority of the 143 participants were African American (108) while the White (9), Hispanics (12) and other ethnicities (14) were underrepresented. Consequently, this research is not representative of the dominant

White culture present in the elementary educational system. In addition, the ethnic diversity of the children in each of the subject's classrooms was not a factor currently examined or part of Boyd's (2002) research. Ethnicity may still be found to be distributed unevenly across teacher ethnicity when the sample accurately represents the dominant culture and the ethnic makeup of the children in each subject's classroom is a variable in the research.

Research Question 3 – Years of Teaching Experience

One of the most significant results in this research was the influence that years of teaching experience had on the perceptions of urban elementary teachers in the implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom. Elementary teachers with 6 to 11 years of teaching experience indicated more favorable perceptions of CRM than those teachers with 16 or more years of teaching experience. These results were consistent with those of Mainhart (2002), Chang (1995), and Summerville (2002) who found a similar result. However, the results by Boyd (2002) were not similar to those of the present study. That researcher found that the variable years of teaching experience was not related to the perceptions of teachers regarding the implementation of culturally diverse materials in the classroom.

The finding that teachers with fewer years of teaching experience view CRM more favorably than those with extensive teaching experience is not surprising given the results for research question 1. It is possible, but not common, for an older teacher to have little experience as a teacher; older teachers tend to have extensive teacher experience. However, it is impossible for a young teacher (25 years of age or fewer) to

have extensive teacher experience (16 more years). Consequently, there is likely a strong correlation between a teacher's age and his/her teaching experience.

The link between age and experience, however, cannot be assumed in all cases. Although a strong correlation likely exists between these two variables in a population, it is possible that an older teacher has little teaching experience. At this intersection of advanced age but little teaching experience, researchers can better examine the relationship between these two variables and CRM. Since age and experience are rarely divisible, concentrating on this anomaly may shed more light on which variable, age or experience, better predicts valuation of CRM.

Research Question 4 –Level of Education

The results of my study suggest that the education level of teachers does not affect valuation of CRM. Teachers holding a bachelor's degree did not perceive CRM differently than those teachers who completed a master's degree program. Although no significant finding was found according to education level, this finding does have at least one important consequence on the relationship between education and a teacher's perceived value of CRM.

If bachelor's degree holders do not perceive CRM differently than master's degree holders, then we may conclude that pedagogy at higher levels of education are neither focusing more or less attention on CRM than the lower levels. In other words, CRM and related pedagogical foci are taught similarly at the two levels of education. Of course, the question remains whether there should be different foci at the two different levels. Supposedly, a master's degree program is not simply more education; it is truly a

higher level of education that digs deeper into a subject area. This research suggests that the focus on CRM is not different between the two levels because perceptions of CRM are not distributed differently according to education level. Consequently, this research may have tapped into an underdeveloped portion of master's degree programs of failing to promote diversity more intensely at the higher educational levels.

Demand for teachers to hold masters' degrees increases due to state regulations and incentives offered by some districts and states to teachers in the system (Sherman, 1991). Results here suggest that no difference exists between holders of a master's degree and holders of a bachelor's degree when it comes to valuing culturally responsive materials. It has been suggested in the literature that the best master's degree program for a teacher is one in which the district engages with a university to provide a professional development experience in which the teacher learns exactly what is needed rather than adhering to a standard and uncustomized curriculum (Muchmore & Crowell, 2002). In line with these concepts, this study suggests that teachers are not receiving more education on the value of culturally responsive materials in a master's versus a bachelor's program.

Missing from this research was the ability to examine those teachers who hold doctoral degrees; no subject in the study responded as holding such a degree. Consequently, there is no way to determine whether universities reserve diversity education for terminal degree status and whether such status should be taught more intensely at the lower levels.

The variable level of education was expressed as a dichotomous variable. There were 54 (37.8%) urban elementary teachers who held a bachelor's degree and 89 (62.2%) who held a master's degree. See Table 5.1 for these results.

Table 5.1. Frequency Distribution of Participants by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number	Percent
Bachelor's degree	54	37.8
Master's degree	89	62.2
Total	143	100.0

Research Question 5 – Professional Development

The results of my study suggest that CRM valuation is not equally distributed across three categories of professional development. Specifically, subjects who indicated having taken more than one course in multicultural education perceived CRM higher than those subjects who indicated that they took just one course in multicultural education. Similarly, those subjects who indicated that they have multicultural teaching experience value CRM more than those subjects who indicated that they took just one course in multicultural education. Clearly, one course seems inadequate to maximize CRM valuation in comparison to multi-course or multicultural teaching experience.

This finding, however, is not conclusive from a causation point of view. Simply because a correlation was found between professional development and perceptions of

CRM, no causal relationship can be inferred. It is possible that people who already valued or were concerned about diversity were drawn to multiple courses in multicultural education and the teaching of students in a multicultural education. This predisposition may also affect a teacher's valuation of CRM regardless of any professional development experiences. The positive relationship between courses and CRM and multicultural teaching experience and CRM may only be a spurious rather than a substantive one.

Research suggests that higher levels of exposure to a subject create better retention and higher levels of recognition (Durrant & Schmidt, 2010). In line with these results, this research suggests that more exposure and relevant exposure are two factors contributing to higher levels in the valuation of culturally responsive materials. Consequently, perceptions of culturally responsive materials may be a function of exposure to both the main topic of these materials and the periphery topics that contribute understanding of their purpose. As this study suggests, both formal and informal exposure to cultural diversity correlates with valuation of culturally responsive materials. Therefore, this study aligns with extant literature on how exposure enhances recognition and recall.

Research Question 6 – Prior Knowledge

The results of my research suggest that perceptions of CRM are not affected by prior knowledge as defined in this study. Specifically, subjects belonging to various categories covering prior experiences at college and high school and knowledge of

cultural diversity in friendships and at work did not perceive CRM differently. This finding suggests that personal experiences may not play a vital role in valuing CRM.

As with most research, not every situation or experience can be captured to conclusively determine whether some variable predicts all or a significant portion of the variability in the focal construct. As defined in this study, CRM captures general attitudes toward culturally responsive materials in the classroom rather than any specific or detailed element of the multicultural classroom. Consequently, identifying exactly which life experiences of teachers affect valuation of CRM is speculative at best, especially since extant literature has not looked deeply into the connections between these two constructs. The life experiences captured here are certainly not inclusive of all possible life experiences of teachers. Additionally, the high incidence of minorities over the representatives of the dominant culture may have skewed results. Consequently, more research is needed on the relationships among life experience, prior knowledge of multicultural issues, and perceptions of CRM.

Few studies have examined whether prior knowledge with cultural diversity is a factor when valuing culturally responsive materials. The reason for this may be the literature's focus, a teacher's current demographics, and an ignorance of the effects of experiences on current issues. More research is needed on the effects of a teacher's diverse experiences and how they shape beliefs and cognitions when it comes to culturally diverse materials. In particular, past exposure to cultural diversity and the cognitions that develop over numerous years may add insight into how and why a

teacher values cultural diversity and the implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the results can be best leveraged to correct curricula that lack the proper levels of CRM in classrooms where it is needed. In an earlier section of this study, it was argued that CRM is an essential part of any pedagogy in which classrooms contain students who are not a part of the dominant culture. Students not able to relate to the dominant paradigm of learning, language, and social skills may fall behind, be labeled as learning disabled, or simply fail to learn the value of education.

It is recommended that teachers do not implement CRM in the classroom on a student-by-student basis. CRM costs money, funds not every district or school can afford all at once. To implement CRM as a permanent part of a curriculum, the teachers, administrators, and parents of students will find that multiple voices working together can bring about change more quickly and more accurately than individuals. This research suggests that some categories of teachers value CRM more than other categories. Although this research cannot identify the exact mechanisms or cognitions at play that cause these differences, it is clear that some teachers and administrators are more likely to be receptive of changes to a curriculum than others. Consequently, targeting these individuals will increase the chances of a positive reception of CRM implementation. When the positive results of this implementation become clear, other less receptive teachers may be recruited to implement them as well.

A single study cannot define the importance or direction of a contemporary social issue; this study is no different. However, this research, in corroboration with other research, does hint at the direction future research needs to take to get closer to understanding the important yet largely misunderstood or ignored role of CRM in the classroom. The next section of this study discusses possible directions for future research into CRM and related multicultural issues in urban elementary classrooms and curricula.

Future Research

A single research study cannot encompass all of the important areas of subject; in fact, many studies' limitations become pertinent fodder for future research. The limitations of this study bring some important issues to the surface for implementation and valuation of CRM in urban elementary school classrooms. First, as mentioned above, few subjects in this research indicated having little teaching experience (fewer than 5 years). Consequently, the impact of inexperience on CRM valuation was inconclusive. Future research needs to focus more heavily on this cross section of urban teachers to better assess whether CRM is truly valued more by younger rather than older teachers. In essence, representative samples rather than reliance on statistics should drive the research and CRM knowledge creation.

The sample used in this study suggests that the ethnic makeup of teachers in urban settings many not mirror the average teacher. To get a handle on teacher perceptions of CRM, future research needs to focus on more diverse samples; when too much of one ethnic group is represented in a sample, data and, consequently, the knowledge derived from that data may be skewed and lead researchers to provide

inaccurate conclusions. A similar research study in the area of teachers' perceptions of professional parathion to teach students of color should be replicate at several school districts in order to compare and contrast the results of this study.

Teaching experience as a variable in any education research is bound to be positively correlated with age. Given that the two are indelibly linked, it is difficult to determine which variable better predicts CRM valuation. Perhaps teaching experience offsets the advantages of a more recent education making CRM appear not to vary across age and experience. Future research needs to separate these variables to either corroborate or refute the results here.

In the present study, only two levels of education (bachelor's and master's degrees) were captured in the sample; no subject held a doctoral degree. Although it may be premature to make concrete conclusions about the correlation between education level and perceptions of CRM, it would appear that holding a higher level degree does not increase CRM valuation. More research is needed that more closely examines this relationship to determine whether different education levels are capable of increasing CRM perceptions.

Although no significant relationship appears to exist between training, multicultural teaching experience, and CRM valuation, a longitudinal study is needed to examine these variables. As stated above, a distinction needs to be made between correlation and causation when it comes to personal life experience and perceptions for a method of teaching such as CRM. What is needed is a field experiment rather than the

field study method used here to better isolate the variables and accurately determine the relationships found in the field.

There is no doubt that experiences and environments shape a teacher's perceptions of the value of CRM and other related subjects. The diverse experiences used as categories in this research failed to explain any variability in CRM valuation. However, the categories used here are far from exhaustive. More research is needed that takes into account a more comprehensive list of life experiences that are both disparate and representative of the experiences of urban elementary teachers.

Implications for Further Research

Additional studies are warranted in the area of CRM. It is suggested that a qualitative study explore why the results exist among various teachers. A study should be conducted among European American teachers and other ethnic groups. A study should be conducted among a significant number of males. It is imperative that African American teachers feel comfortable with students despite existing cultural similarities. This district has a large number of African American students and African American teacher population. Administrators serving this area have yet realized the need for multicultural education

Conclusions

Based on the results of this research, the variables of age, teaching experience, and professional development affect how teachers value CRM. This suggests that these variables can have important ramifications for educators and administrators in urban and culturally diverse schools. First, administrators looking to increase CRM as part of an

experimental or permanent curriculum are likely to get higher levels of support from younger, less experienced, and more culturally aware teachers. This is not to say that teachers in other categories are naturally against increasing CRM in a curriculum; it simply means that change can be difficult when teachers have become accustomed to a standard curriculum. Once they see that others are in favor of the changes, administrators can better approach the other teachers and show that implementation of CRM has positive overall effects on student learning.

Ethnicity was not found to be a significant predictor of the perceptions of CRM. However, as stated above, the majority of the subjects in this study represented the African American culture, while very few represented the dominant White culture. Similarly, education level was not found to significantly predict CRM valuation. Nevertheless, this finding did reveal an interesting question as to whether multicultural education is or should be taught differently at different levels of education. Finally, perceptions of CRM did not differ among categories of prior knowledge and experience with multiculturalism. Future research will have to examine more comprehensive categories of multicultural experience before conclusions can be made about a teacher's prior experience and the value placed on CRM.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between urban teachers' perceptions and their implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom. Specifically, this study examined the influences of age, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, education level, professional development, and prior knowledge

with culturally diverse populations on perceptions of implementing culturally responsive materials in urban elementary classrooms. Results indicate that age, years of teaching experience, and professional development are predictors of perceptions of culturally responsive materials. The ethnicity, education level, and prior knowledge of urban elementary teachers were not found to significantly correlate with CRM valuation.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a study regarding your perceptions of Urban Elementary Teachers Regarding the Implementation of Culturally Responsive Materials in the Classroom. My name is Johnetta Hicks and I am a doctoral level student at Texas A&M University in the department of Teaching, Learning and Culture. I am requesting your help with a research project that focuses on cultural responsive teaching. The purpose of this study is to explore and learn about the perceptions of urban elementary teachers regarding the implantation of culturally diverse materials into the classroom.

Your participation is voluntary. You may discontinue participation at anytime. Your response to all or any of the questions is needed. This study will provide valuable information to all persons who are responsible for assisting in helping student succeed.

No reference will be made to any persons or school in the study and it will not affect your future relations with the district or Texas A&M University.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 281-412-6966 or by email at jjhicks1204@aol.com. If you have any additional questions, you may contact my professor, Dr. Norvella Carter at Texas A&M University at College Station or by email at the following address: ncarter@tamu.edu.

Sincerely,

Johnetta Hicks

APPENDIX B
INFORMATION SHEET

INFORMATION SHEET

EXAMINING THE PERCEPTIONS OF URBAN ELEMENTARY TEACHERS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE MATERIALS IN THE CLASSROOM

You have been asked to participate in a research study regarding your perceptions of urban elementary teachers regarding the implementation of culturally responsive materials in the classroom. A total of 215 people have been asked to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to explore and learn about the perceptions of urban elementary teachers and the implementation of culturally responsive materials. These components will assist you in meeting the need of teachers and their students. Information about cultural responsiveness informs the teacher of his/her roles and responsibilities and how to utilize culturally responsive caring and teaching the information provided in this research will guide the teacher in practical applications of multicultural education.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to respond to a survey that will only take 25 minutes to complete. There are no risks or benefits associated with this study.

This study will be conducted anonymously. You will complete the survey and return it to the dean of instruction for your building. Once collected by the dean, all questionnaires will be mailed in an addressed envelope to the researcher. Additionally, the survey will not ask for names of any of the participants. All responses will be coded to ensure anonymity. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Johnetta Hicks and Norvella Carter will have access to the records. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with North Forest ISD or Texas A&M University. If you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions that make you feel uncomfortable. You can withdraw at any time without your relations with the university, job, benefits, etc., being affected.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 281.412.6966 or by email at the following address: jjhicks1204@aol.com. If you have any additional questions, you may contact my professor, Dr. Norvella Carter at Texas A&M University at College Station or by email at the following address: ncarter@tamu.edu.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, you can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Research Compliance, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) 845-8585 (mwbuckley@tamu.edu).

Keep this information sheet for your records.

APPENDIX C
SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

PART I: Background Information Survey (BIS)

Directions: Please circle the letter of the response that best represents you.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. What is your gender? | A. Male
B. Female |
| 2. What is your ethnicity? | A. African American
B. Anglo American
C. Asian
D. Hispanic
E. Other (Please be specific.)

_____ |
| 3. What is your age? | A. 25 or less
B. 26 to 35
C. 36 to 45
D. 46 and above |
| 4. How many years of teaching experience do you have? | A. Novice (5 years or less)
B. Moderately experienced (6 to 11 years)
C. Experienced (12 to 15 years)
D. Veteran (16 years and more) |
| 5. What is your level of education? | A. Bachelor's
B. Master's
C. Doctorate
D. Other (Please be specific.)

_____ |

6. What is your level of professional development in multicultural education?

- A. A course in Multicultural Education
- B. More than one course in Multicultural Education
- C. Teaching experience in an urban School
- D. None of the above

7. What is your level of prior knowledge?

- A. Attended a high school that reflected a culturally diverse student population.
- B. Worked with a culturally diverse population
- C. Had a friendship with a person from another culture
- D. Attended a college that reflected a culturally diverse student population

PART II: Culturally Responsive Material Survey (CRMS)

Directions: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding implementation of culturally responsive materials into the classroom? Circle the number that applies to each statement below.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. Culturally responsive materials are increasingly becoming a part of your teaching and curriculum.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. A well designed continuing staff development program is essential for the development and implementation of culturally responsive materials into the curriculum.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. The implementation of culturally responsive materials should be implemented with teaching strategies that are interactive.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. It is essential that students be given ample opportunities to express their feelings and interact with their classmates when culturally responsive materials are implemented.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Teaching methods need to be readjusted to incorporate culturally responsive materials in the classroom.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. Teaching to students' cultural backgrounds will help them understand the objectives being taught.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. It is the responsibility of the teacher to assist students by implementing culturally responsive materials in the classroom that represent the cultures of their students.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. As the student population becomes more culturally diverse, the classroom environment should become more receptive to students from diverse backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. In order to become a more effective teacher, one needs to be aware of culturally responsive materials.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Using culturally responsive materials in the classroom can help a teacher work more effectively with a diverse student population.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. Awareness of culturally responsive materials and their uses will improve relations among students from diverse backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. The implementation of culturally responsive materials is relevant for the subject you teach.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

You have completed the survey. Thank you very much for your participation.

Survey #

VITA

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 c/o Dr. Norvella Carter
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 College Station, TX 77843-4232

EDUCATION

2010	Doctor of Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
1998	Guidance and Counseling Certification Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas
1989	Master of Education Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas
1984	Bachelor of Science, Business Education Wiley College, Marshall, Texas

EXPERIENCE

8/06 – 5/09	Counselor Houston Independent School District, Houston, Texas
2/01 – 7/06	Counselor Galena Park Independent School District, Galena Park, Texas
8/96 – 5/01	Business Computer Information System (BCIS) Teacher Aldine Independent School District, Houston, Texas
8/94 – 5/96	Business Computer Information System (BCIS) Teacher La Marque Independent School District, LaMarque, Texas
8/90 – 6/94	Computer Library Teacher, Spring Branch Independent School District, Houston, Texas
8/85 – 5/90	Accounting Teacher, Houston Independent School District Houston, Texas
9/84 – 5/85	General Business Education Teacher, Powell Point Independent School District, Kendleton, Texas

This dissertation was typed and edited by Marilyn M. Oliva at Action Ink, Inc.